

# THE MILITANT INSIDE

Washington holds minors  
at Guantánamo prison camp  
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Fidel Castro details U.S. provocations in escalation of hijackings

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The recent arrests, trials, and convictions of 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution on charges of collaboration with a hostile state power—Washington—in its campaign to subvert Cuban sovereignty and overthrow the revolutionary government, and the executions of three men who hijacked a passenger ferry in Havana, were measures taken in response to a pattern of escalating provocations since last summer, organized and promoted by the U.S. government, said Cuban president Fidel Castro in a televised presentation April 25.

In his speech, the Cuban president de-

Continued on Page 4

## Donate now to 'Militant' fund drive

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The *Militant* is making an appeal to all its readers to make a generous contribution to the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* Fund and to send it in now. A special effort is needed by all supporters of the socialist press to achieve the goal of raising \$85,000 by May 12.

More than 500 people have made pledges toward the international goal. Fund-raising meetings have been taking place in a number of cities and the pace of the campaign has picked up. Last week the *Militant* received the largest amount of

Continued on Page 5

## Nat'l Lawyers Guild in Iowa hears Calero on fight against deportation

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—"Róger Calero and Omar Jamal are in those numbers of people who are campaigning to make social changes, and come under attack by the expanding domestic policies of the 'Patriot Act' and the proposed 'Patriot Act II,'" said Peter Erlinder at the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) 2003 Midwest Regional Conference here April 11-12.

Erlinder is a professor of law at the William Mitchell College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is also one of Omar Jamal's attorneys. Jamal, executive director of the Somali Justice Advocacy Center in Minnesota, has led a public campaign to stop the deportation of fellow Somalis and to protest the killing of a Somali man by Minneapolis cops. The Bureau of Immigration

Continued on Page 9

## U.S. gov't steps up drive toward war with Iran

Iraqi Shiites lead protests to end U.S.-British occupation

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Washington has accelerated its course toward war against Iran, as demonstrators in the south of Iraq, mostly Shiite Muslims, have poured into the streets to demand an end to the foreign military occupation.

Pro-Iranian Shiite leaders have seized the initiative to stand at the head of the protests against the U.S. and British imperialist occupation of the country. They have used this position to advance their call for the establishment of an "Islamic republic" in Iraq.

To justify their war drive, U.S. officials have added more charges against Iran, in addition to their ongoing allegation that Tehran is developing nuclear "weapons of mass destruction." Now they are also accusing the Iranian government of sending agents over its border to southern Iraq to foster protests by

Continued on Page 6



In the ancient city of Karbala, one million people from Baghdad, Mosul, and Najaf as well as cities in the south, joined a traditional pilgrimage. It became a celebration of Shiite identity, as well as a vehicle to demand an end to the U.S. and British imperialist occupation.

## Meat packers on strike at Tyson spread their message through 'Truth Squads'



Militant/Jorge Lertora

Meat packers striking Tyson and supporters at April 26 solidarity rally in Jefferson, Wisconsin. Union Truth Squads are winning support for strike throughout Midwest.

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

JEFFERSON, Wisconsin—Some 200 people turned out April 26 for the rally here in solidarity with workers on strike against Tyson Foods. This was the third such action called by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538 since its members walked out of the sausage plant on February 28.

Strikers explained that they took the action in face of the bosses' intransigence, expressed in a series of take-back demands referred to by the workers as the company's "ten commandments."

Workers from two other local meatpacking plants joined the rally. Other participants sported caps bearing the logos

of a number of unions, including the Teamsters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Service Employees and International Union, the two teachers unions in the state, and other UFCW locals. Two carloads of postal workers in Minnesota drove to the rally on the invitation of a striker who had addressed them.

Speakers at the rally included a representative of the United Auto Workers in Janesville, Wisconsin—a local in GM assembly and parts plants that has been active in building solidarity with the strike. Two representatives of a group of meat packers from Omaha also spoke, along with officials of the Green and Democratic parties. Participants enjoyed songs by Anne

Feeney, and a hot dog meal provided by the organizers.

After the rally, three members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 538 described their experiences in spreading the word about the strike against Tyson Foods in the Midwest through the union "Truth Squads."

Experiences of 'Truth Squads'

These union members walked out February 28, after nine months of contract negotiations failed to push back the food giant's demands for numerous concessions.

"We knew we wanted to get out just after the strike started," recounted Scott Howard, who has worked in the factory kitchen for 19 years. He was one of 11 strikers who set out in three vehicles in mid-March to visit meatpacking plants in

Continued on Page 3

### Also Inside:

- Washington punishes French rulers over Iraq war 2
- U.S. government halts talks with north Korea 2
- Farouk Abdel-Muhti: one year in U.S. jails without charges 3
- Texas Machinists approve contract with Lockheed 3
- U.S. airlines use 'bankruptcy' fraud to slash wages, benefits 9

# Washington punishes Paris over Iraq war

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Top U.S. government officials made it crystal clear at the end of April that Washington intends to exact a steep price from Paris for its defiance of the U.S. rulers over the war on Iraq. The U.S. government is pressing to deal further blows to Paris as the French-German alliance in the European Union has weakened as a result of the long-term decline of the German economy.

When asked in an April 22 television interview if Paris would suffer consequences for opposing Washington's assault on Iraq, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell answered, "Yes. We have to look at all aspects of our relationship with France in light of this."

"I think some of the papers have described 'yes' as 'war,'" State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the following day, referring to Powell's remarks. Calling such reports "exaggerated," Boucher said that nonetheless the consequences for the French government would be more than "philosophical."

"In France," said an article in the April 29 *New York Times*, "there is a widespread skittishness over American calls to boycott French products."

Such measures would strengthen the U.S. rulers' economic supremacy over their competitors in France, as well as other imperialist powers in the EU, and reinforce Washington's role as the number one economic and military power in Europe.

"I doubt he'll be coming to the ranch anytime soon," said U.S. president George Bush, referring to French president Jacques Chirac, in an April 24 interview with NBC television. The "ranch" is the 574-hectare estate in Crawford, Texas, where Bush wines and dines foreign heads of state. "It appeared to some in our administration and our country that the French position was anti-American," Bush said.

The same week Bush administration officials told the press that the U.S. president will spend his nights in a Swiss, not French, hotel when he attends an international economic summit meeting in the French Alps later this spring.

"We are not forcing anyone to spend the night in France," a senior French diplomat responded. He noted that the Swiss government had also opposed the U.S.-led assault on Iraq. "They didn't even allow overflight rights for American planes," he said.

Paris has up to now been iced out of the bidding for the lucrative contracts in Iraq being doled out by the U.S. occupation regime. Washington is also seeking to exclude the French government from military decisions in NATO, and from international meetings where Paris has enjoyed privileged status over weaker European imperialist powers.

In February, Washington effectively sidelined France in NATO as it pushed, over Paris's objections, to use the military alliance's resources to aid the U.S. military buildup in Turkey. Washington bypassed NATO's governing body, the North Atlantic Council, which includes France, and rubber-stamped the decision with the Defense Planning Council, of which France is not a member. U.S. officials say they will employ this method of shutting Paris out of NATO decisions in the future.

## EU military force

For his part, Chirac will travel to Brussels April 29 for talks with the German and Belgian governments on a Belgian proposal to bolster military collaboration among these imperialist powers. Plans for this EU military force have so far not included London, Washington's closest imperialist ally.

U.S. government officials are taking steps to downgrade Paris's place at other international meetings. "We want to find places where France has special privileges and ask whether it is smart to continue those," said a U.S. official.

At one such gathering, an annual conference between representatives from the United States, Britain, Germany, and

France, Washington added diplomats from Spain and Italy to the list of envoys. The governments of the two countries backed Washington and London in their invasion of Iraq.

The Bush administration plans to introduce a resolution in the United Nations Security Council proposing to lift sanctions Washington imposed on Iraq in 1990 and maintained through the 12 years after the Gulf War. Under Washington's proposal, profits from Iraqi oil production would no longer be handed over to the UN to divide up through the so-called oil-for-food program, but would be channeled through the Pentagon-run occupation regime.

In contrast, Paris has argued for suspending, not abolishing, the sanctions until UN "inspectors" certify that Iraq is free of "weapons of mass destruction." The French rulers continue to plead for a central UN role in the occupation.

French companies profited handsomely from the UN sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s. With the U.S.-led overthrow of the Baghdad regime, billions in loan and investment deals between the Hussein government and French firms and banks—many of them granted through the United Nations—are threatened.

Washington announced April 25 that it will oppose Paris's "bloated" request for 250 UN troops to be stationed alongside the French military forces in the West African nation of Ivory Coast. Paris currently has 4,000 troops in the former French colony, enforcing a cease-fire agreement brokered in January by French officials.

As Washington has accelerated its

course toward a military assault on Iran, accusing it of sending agents into Iraq to foment rebellion among the Shiite majority, Paris has taken steps to build its influence in Tehran. French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin made an unannounced trip to the Iranian capital April 25, and was at the side of his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Kharrazi, when the latter denied the U.S. allegations of meddling in Iraqi affairs (see front-page article).

At the same time French officials have added their voices to U.S.-initiated demands for Iran to submit to UN weapons "inspectors."

De Villepin's visit to Iran was part of a Mideast tour that also took in Egypt, Syrian, and Lebanon—countries which have been, and remain, sources of massive profits to French imperialism.

As Paris tries to counter the blows dealt to its interests in the region, and more broadly by Washington's assertion of its military and economic superiority, the French rulers are also confronted by the relative weakening of the European Union as a counterweight to U.S. power.

The Franco-German alliance at the core of the EU has become weaker in the context of the deepening crisis of the German economy and the associated crisis of confidence of the German rulers. German capitalism has increasingly lived up to its nickname of the "sick man of Europe," a far cry from the time of its original thrust—formalized in 1957 with the foundation of the European Economic Community—to impose its domination over its allies and rivals in the center and west of the continent.

## U.S. gov't halts talks with north Korea

BY RÓGER CALERO

Washington has sought to step up the pressure against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), after Pyongyang reportedly admitted it has nuclear weapons at a meeting in Beijing April 24. U.S. government officials announced two days later that the White House will seek support from Washington's imperialist allies and other governments to impose new sanctions on the DPRK.

According to the Associated Press, "Administration officials had said Thursday

[April 24] that North Korean delegate Li Gun told Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly that his country had nuclear weapons and would test, export or use them, depending on U.S. actions." Li Gun, a north Korean deputy foreign minister, reportedly made the statement during a three-day meeting with U.S. government representatives hosted by the Chinese government.

North Korean officials also reportedly told the U.S. delegation that Pyongyang had reprocessed enough spent nuclear fuel rods to be used in the production of nuclear weapons. "That claim is not backed up by U.S. intelligence," an April 26 AP article stated.

Two weeks earlier, Washington failed to get the United Nations Security Council to issue an official condemnation of north Korea at its April 9 meeting, which would have paved the way for UN-sponsored sanctions against Pyongyang. The proposal was vetoed by Beijing and Moscow. The UN body, however, did express its "concern" over the DPRK's nuclear program, which furthered the U.S. objective of isolating north Korea diplomatically and politically.

Beijing hosted the trilateral talks with Washington and Pyongyang, aiding the U.S. government's goal of tying China and other governments in the region into its anti-DPRK campaign. China is north Korea's

largest trading partner, and its largest source of food and economic aid. It provides 70 percent of the country's oil.

To pressure the north Korean workers state, the Bush administration has demanded it abandon its nuclear program before considering a nonaggression pact or a resumption of deliveries of oil and food to north Korea. Washington halted the shipments in October. The oil and food aid was part of the 1994 Agreed Framework, under which the U.S., Japanese, and south Korean governments also promised to assist in the construction of nuclear power reactors in north Korea that would not be capable of reprocessing weapons-grade plutonium. In exchange, Pyongyang agreed to freeze its nuclear weapons program.

"As the DPRK laid out a new proposal for the settlement of the nuclear issue, proceeding from its stand to avert a war on the Korean Peninsula and achieve lasting peace and stability, it will follow the future attitude of the United States toward us," said a statement by the north Korean foreign ministry.

Washington's latest escalation of its campaign against north Korea builds on earlier threats of carrying out bombing strikes to destroy north Korea's nuclear reactor at Yongbyon.

## THE MILITANT

### What's behind U.S. war moves against Iran?

*As Washington cements its occupation of Iraq, it is already on a collision course with Iran. The 'Militant' brings you the facts about these events, while explaining the gains Iran's toilers made through the revolutionary overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah. Don't miss a single issue!*



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# Lockheed workers approve contract after two-week strike

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

FORT WORTH, Texas—Striking Machinists at the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. factory here approved a new contract proposal April 27, after 13 days on the picket line outside the largest U.S. military contractor. Union members agreed to the pact by a vote of 2,192 to 554.

This was the third strike at the plant since 1984.

"If they don't do something about those attacks on our health-care benefits, I'll be right back here Monday," said John Hendricks, as he greeted other workers in front of the union hall across from the plant's main gate, the day before the vote on the contract.

Initial reports indicate that the three-year contract includes wage increases of 4 percent in the first year, and a 3 percent raise in each of the next two years. Workers will receive a \$1,500 signing bonus, higher retirement pay, and additional holidays, reports the April 28 *Newark Star Ledger*.

The 4,000 workers, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) District Lodge 776, walked out April 14 in response to a contract proposal that included cuts in health-care coverage for production workers and increases in medical and prescription co-payments.

"My picket duty is Tuesdays from 12 to 4," Hendricks stated. "But I come here every day. We'll see what they have to offer tomorrow. If it isn't what we need, we'll stay right here."

The government sent a federal mediator April 25 to reopen negotiations. The union called the April 27 membership meeting to discuss and vote on the new contract proposal.

On April 26, the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* reported that the union negotiating committee would present proposals to the workers for a vote the following day. Many workers stopped by the union hall to verify these reports.

As the IAM members continued picketing, workers from other unions in the plant organized a cookout for the strikers. "We want to show our support," said Héctor García as he flipped burgers in front of the union hall feeding more than 200 unionists during that Saturday afternoon. He and his fellow cooks are members of the Federated Independent Texas Union (FITU) and they work side by side with the striking Machinists in the plant, he said.

The company initially said that production would continue in the plant of more than 15,000. Management has now admitted very little is being manufactured.

"We will have to see the company's proposals," stated Garlin Henderson, picket

captain at Lockheed's main gate. "We will take our time to look at them and then we will vote. They report record profits, but make an offer to us that's insulting," he said, in describing why he and other Machinists voted to strike April 13.

Lockheed recently reported a 15 percent gain in first-quarter profits this year, with the biggest increases in the aeronautics division.

"I don't want the health insurance costs to eat up my income," said Paul Moody as he picketed with Henderson. He works on the fighter jets' forward fuselage tanks. "They call me a 'tank rat,'" said Moody. "I climb inside the tanks to do my work." Moody, a new hire who has worked for Lockheed for less than a year, recalled a previous job as a valet where increasing health-care costs did in fact eat up all his wages. "I don't want to go back to that," he stated.

"For me the big thing about this strike is how high everyone's morale is," Moody said.

*Tony Dutrow from Houston, Texas, contributed to this article.*

## New York protesters demand release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian held for a year without charges



Militant/John Studer

Nearly 40 people rallied April 25 at the Federal Building in New York to demand the immediate release from prison of Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti, and to support his right to live in the United States. The rally marked the one-year anniversary of his detention by immigration police, who have jailed the Palestinian fighter without charges and under the threat of deportation. Abdel-Muhti is now being held at the York County jail in York, Pennsylvania, where he has been kept in solitary confinement since the end of February. "I raise my voice to all of you," said Abdel-Muhti in a written message read at the protest. "Standing shoulder to shoulder we will not let them intimidate us. Support me in the demand for my release, and the release of all the immigrant detainees."

## Tyson strikers win support in Midwest

Continued from front page

Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska.

"We'd leave out from the motel in the morning, one vehicle one way, the other toward another, so we reached a whole lot of people in those four days," Howard said. "The plants are all so big: Sioux Falls has around 2,000, Dakota City about 3,000, Sioux City over 2,000." The Jefferson plant employs 470 workers. "In some places they let us stand by the plant—at others, across the street. We hand billed to let them know that what's happening to us could be happening to you."

The company's takeback demands include a two-tier pay scale cutting hourly rates for new hires from \$11.09 to \$9, and freezing pay for others over a four-year period; eliminating pensions for new hires and freezing benefits for the rest; increasing health-care premiums by as much as \$40 a week and eliminating health-care supplements for retirees; cutting sick leave and disability benefits by more than half; reducing vacations; eliminating two paid holidays for new hires; taking away the right to severance pay if the plant closes; and ending the profit-sharing program.

"The high point was at the Cherokee, Iowa, plant where only 650 people work," stated Howard. "But they put \$2,200 in our donation cans. They had been on strike three or four times before and know what

it means to fight."

Linda Kolodzne, a machine operator in the slicing department for 20 years, described another stop she made while on the UFCW Local 538 Truth Squad. "We showed up at a plant in Iowa that's pretty run down, in a poor area of the town," she said. "It's clear that conditions must be pretty bad in there. We walked right up to the front door to explain where we're from and asked, 'Where can we do this?' Company security told us we had to go over to the other side of the road. Then city cops and state troopers showed up. It was a cold, windy day."

Despite company and cop obstructions, she said, workers did stop to talk and explained that "conditions there are horrible, like back to 19th-century manufacturing. Where we are, the plant is modern, well-kept. There's no kill floor, just processing. We're right by downtown, part of the life of the city." Kolodzne said this experience was "very humbling."

### 'Shocked' at concession demands

Mike French heads up Local 538's Action Committee, which coordinates trips like these. Of the three strikers who gave interviews to the Militant, he's the only one who had a post in the union prior to the strike.

He is the local's recording secretary, and a union steward in the slicing department. He has worked in the plant 28 years.

"After the big one, we sent other Truth Squads to Austin and Albert Lea, Minnesota, then another to smaller plants in Illinois and Iowa," French said. "In Austin, we spoke to a union meeting. A couple of people told us they thought what they had seen on the fliers was just a joke someone was spreading around the plant to stir them up. We explained that these are really the concessions Tyson wants from us, and then they were shocked."

The Action Committee also coordinates regular picketing at the offices of the QPS temporary employment agency. This outfit is hired by Tyson to recruit scabs in Beloit, Greenfield, and Racine, Wisconsin, and at a hotel in Watertown where Tyson is seeking to hire directly from ads in local papers. This picketing involves many more strikers than the road trips.

The Action Committee is planning trips for teams of strikers to reach out more broadly both to the West and the East. The trips include visiting Tyson customers and drawing attention to the actions of the individual members of the company's board of directors. The goal is to put pressure on Tyson management to return to the bargaining table.

No new talks have been scheduled so far between Tyson and the UFCW, and the union has filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board accusing the company of bad-faith bargaining.

Tyson—the world's largest processor and marketer of chicken, beef and pork—reported gross income of more than \$23 billion in 2002. It employs 120,000 people in 300 facilities in 29 states and 22 countries. Tyson acquired the Jefferson, Wisconsin, facility—along with dozens of other meat packing and processing plants—in the September 2001 purchase of meat giant IBP Inc. The plant here produces pepperoni for several brands of frozen pizzas and various national pizza restaurant chains, as well as hams, ring bologna, and hot dogs.

The March/April Truth Squads brought in thousands of dollars of donations to help sustain the strikers. Many unions in the region are chipping in. Local 538's Food Committee is coordinating the many donations to the food pantry. Its Hardship Committee organizes the "Adopt-A-Family" program, through which a union local can help sustain a striker's family for the duration of the fight. Picket lines in front of the plant are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Participants at the April 26 rally were also invited to the next solidarity event set for May 10 here.

From their efforts, Howard said he saw "lots of people's eyes" opened, lots of Hispanics responded. The companies have been trying to divide us, to turn some of us against the union. But as they see this, taking on a big company, more people would say, "maybe we can stand up, too."

Kolodzne now volunteers a minimum of 20 hours a week in the union hall. "Yeah, I went to union meetings before, but this is the first thing to participate in," she said, adding that she wants to encourage anyone "who doesn't like what you're seeing to get involved" with the unions. Kolodzne also made a point of urging those who want more information on this struggle to visit the union's web site at: [www.tysonfamiliesstandup.com](http://www.tysonfamiliesstandup.com)

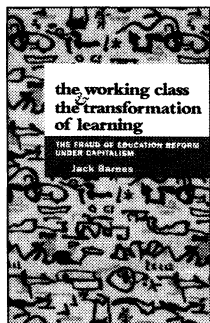
"They didn't know they would find all the people linked arm-in-arm," French said, noting that the company got a surprise when it put the concession package on the table. While workers take chances by walking out, he said, "We can see the strike as an opportunity to make our unions stronger."

*Pattie Thompson is a sewing machine operator and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Chicago.*

### From Pathfinder

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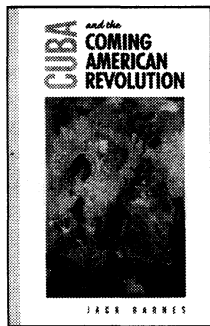
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# Castro speaks on U.S. provocations

Continued from front page

tailed many of the facts on the hijackings that have accelerated in the last eight months and the U.S. government's role in encouraging them by refusing to send the perpetrators back to Cuba or prosecute them in the United States. By limiting visas and wielding the Cuban Adjustment Act, Castro said, Washington provokes these incidents, pushing Cubans to leave the island by jumping on rafts, paying smugglers from Florida to pick them up, and other similar means.

Approved by the U.S. Congress in 1966, the Cuban Adjustment Act encourages people to leave Cuba for the United States by providing virtually automatic asylum to any Cuban who lands on Florida's shores, regardless of crimes they may have committed to get there, and offering them expedited permanent residency status. It is one among a host of hostile policies Washington has directed at the Cuban people for more than four decades. These measures have included bombings, sabotage, scores of assassination attempts against Castro and other Cuban leaders, and an economic war that continues to this day, the Cuban president said.

Three planes and four boats have been hijacked since last August in seven different incidents, Castro pointed out. "We had to act radically to curtail this wave of hijackings, which was shown to be in full bloom by the events that took place after the hijacking of the DC-3 on March 19," he continued. Since the takeover of that flight, authorities had evidence of 29 plans to hijack aircraft and vessels, "something that had not happened in many years," Castro noted. "Definitely, we could not hesitate in applying the sentences handed down by the courts and upheld by the Council of State in the case of the hijackers of the *Baraguá* ferry." That incident took place April 2.

## Trials and convictions of 75

In his presentation, Castro referred to televised remarks he had made on April 4 regarding the activities of James Cason, chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana since last fall.

The two governments have not had diplomatic relations since Washington broke them off in January 1961, as part of the U.S. rulers' response to the victory of the 1959 revolution, when Cuba's toilers brought down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and rapidly installed a government defending the interests of workers and farmers. When the property interests and prerogatives of the wealthy U.S. families and local capitalists and landlords were affected by democratic measures such as a land reform, Washington adopted the course it has followed for more than 40 years of attempting to overthrow the revolutionary leadership and roll back

the gains of Cuba's working people.

Today, each government's diplomatic personnel operates out of an Interests Section, hosted formally by a third country.

"Nobody is unaware of the fact that Mr. Cason, new chief of the Interests Section, came with instructions to carry out all sorts of provocations against Cuba, and that he has attempted to transform his diplomatic headquarters and his own residence into a venue for organizing, instructing, and directing mercenaries who betray their homeland in the service of a foreign power, or violate other laws through acts that cause serious harm to the country, expecting total impunity," Castro said April 4. "Several dozen of them are now standing trial in the courts that deal with crimes against national security."

The trials Castro was referring to were held April 3-7. Seventy-five opponents of the Cuban Revolution were found guilty and sentenced to terms from 6 to 28 years in jail. Cuba's foreign minister, Felipe Pérez Roque, said at an April 9 press conference that Cuban authorities indicted the 75 on criminal charges brought by government prosecutors for violations of the Cuban Penal Code and Law 88, known as the Act for the Protection of the National Independence and the Economy of Cuba.

This law stipulates, among other things, prison terms for any individual who "gathers, reproduces, [or] disseminates subversive material from the government of the United States of America, its agencies, representative bodies, officials, or any foreign entity to support the objectives of the Helms-Burton Act."

Cuba's National Assembly adopted this law in 1999 in response to efforts by Washington to implement the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Burton law, after its initial congressional sponsors. The passage of the "Liberty" act in 1996 registered a significant escalation of the U.S. government's economic war on the Cuban people at the time, and a simultaneous trade offensive by the U.S. rulers against their imperialist allies, especially in Europe and Canada, who have had growing investments in Cuba.

In recent weeks, Cuban officials have described some of the evidence presented to the courts on which the convictions were based.

The evidence included receipts and bills showing that some of the defendants had received funds and other material aid from U.S. diplomats or officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) ranging from \$30 to more than \$7,000. USAID is one of the institutions described in the Helms-Burton law as responsible for channeling financial and other material aid to opponents of the Cuban government calling themselves "human rights" activists, "independent librar-



Hijacked Cuban airliners parked at the Monroe County Airport in Key West, Florida.

ians," and similar designations. A number of Cuban state security agents who had infiltrated the counterrevolutionary groups working with U.S. government officials testified against the defendants, detailing their activities.

## U.S. policy of provocations

Since the arrival of James Cason in Havana on Sept. 10, 2002, as the new head of the U.S. Interests Section, Cason has used his offices there and his residence to hold dozens of meetings with Cubans organizing against the revolutionary government, Castro said. Cason also traveled extensively throughout the island—from Villa Clara to Ciego de Avila and the eastern provinces of Las Tunas, Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo—where he held similar encounters, Castro reported. Cason touted publicly his "6,000-mile" plan to criss-cross the country.

At an increasing number of these events, Washington's man in Havana gave interviews to the national and international press, openly describing his objectives. He also frequently stopped in Miami during visits back home, where he met with groups like the Cuban-American National Foundation and the Council for the Freedom of Cuba. The latter is a paramilitary group that has carried out armed attacks against Cuba from U.S. soil.

During a December 21 visit to Miami, Cason was interviewed on TV Channel 51, where he stated that the "dissidents" he was meeting with in Cuba live "in a military dictatorship, and if people don't meet together, they won't have much chance of prospering."

On February 24, Cason gave a press conference during a gathering at the apartment of Martha Beatriz Roque, an opponent of the Cuban Revolution who was among the 75 convicted of collaborating with Washington's campaign of subversion. The event was organized to commemorate, among other things, the anniversary of the 1996 shootdown by the Cuban Revolutionary Air Force of two planes flown from Florida into Cuban air space by pilots belonging to Brothers to the Rescue.

These pilots had repeatedly violated Cuba's airspace and refused to heed warnings to leave. Brothers to the Rescue is a counterrevolutionary group whose leaders took part in the 1961 U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, and numerous other armed actions against Cuba carried out from U.S. soil, with Washington's complicity.

"Sadly, the Cuban government is afraid of freedom of conscience, afraid of freedom of expression, afraid of human rights," Cason told the press at the February 24 event, according to the Cuban government's transcript. "This group," he continued, pointing to Beatriz Roque and other opponents of the Cuban revolution gathered there, "is demonstrating that there are Cubans who are not afraid. They know that the transition to democracy is underway. We want them to know that they are not alone."

At an April 7 appearance at the University of Miami, Cason declared, "all of our allies agree that their policy goal in Cuba is, ultimately, the same as ours: the rapid and peaceful transition to a democratic government characterized by strong sup-

port for human rights and an open market economy."

## A string of seven hijackings

Washington's policy and Cason's actions have encouraged a string of seven hijackings since last August and numerous other attempted hijackings the Cuban authorities have foiled, Castro stated.

Even before Cason arrived in Cuba, Castro said, "on Aug. 6, 2002, five individuals hijacked a boat called the *Plástico 16*, based in La Coloma, Pinar del Río." The Cuban authorities officially submitted a request to Washington to return the perpetrators to Cuba. "Months later, the five hijackers were released in the United States," Castro stated.

The second hijacking took place November 11, when an AN-2 crop duster plane was commandeered to the United States. After another request by Havana that those responsible be extradited, "The U.S. authorities did not even press charges against the hijackers, who were released four days later. The plane was seized, auctioned off, and in fact stolen, in an open and obvious anti-Cuba maneuver," Castro noted.

The U.S. government holds that if a plane is willingly flown to the United States by a pilot not under coercion, then that act is not a hijacking and no criminal charges are brought.

A boat carrying reinforced concrete from the Isle of Youth, and a Cuban Coast Guard vessel, were then hijacked in January and February of this year, respectively, and taken to the United States (see chronology below).

The next incident took place March 19, when six armed men hijacked a Cuban airliner that was scheduled to fly from Nueva Gerona on the Isle of Youth to Havana. The plane was running out of fuel and landed in Havana, where authorities allowed it to refuel before taking off for Key West, Florida. "The hijacking of a passenger plane in flight," Castro said, "had not occurred for years, since the immigration agreement was signed." He was referring to an accord the

Continued on Page 7

## Chronology of hijackings

**Aug. 6, 2002:** Boat hijacked. Cuba requests return of five hijackers, who Washington then releases from custody.

**November 11:** Crop duster plane hijacked. Cuba requests return of hijackers and plane. Washington releases the hijackers, does not press charges, and takes possession of plane and auctioned it off.

**Jan. 29, 2003:** Cement boat hijacked. Cuba requests return of four hijackers, who U.S. government releases without responding to the Cuban request.

**February 6:** Patrol boat hijacked. Washington does not respond to Cuban request for return of four hijackers. It is not known whether charges have been pressed.

**March 19:** DC-3 passenger plane hijacked in mid-air with 31 people on board. Cuba requests return of six armed hijackers and plane. U.S. officials say hijackers formally charged with air piracy, but they are released on bail. Plane seized by court ruling

on lawsuit.

**March 31:** AN-24 plane with 46 passengers, including 6 children, hijacked in mid-air by man who, after plane lands in Havana low on fuel, threatens to blow up plane with grenade if it is not refueled and flown to United States. U.S. officials agree to prosecute hijackers, and James Cason, chief of U.S. Interests Section, goes to airport briefly to try to dissuade hijacker. Cuban officials negotiate release of 22 hostages in exchange for fuel.

**April 2:** Ferry with 29 passengers, including women and children, hijacked by 11 people. Out of fuel in midst of gale, armed hijackers demand new boat and threaten to throw hostages overboard. Cuban Border Patrol rescues the boat and all hostages.

**April 10:** At Isle of Youth airport, eight individuals attempt to hijack passenger plane and take hostages, using AKM rifle and knives. Cuban authorities foil the hijacking.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA Los Angeles

**The Working-Class Response to Imperialism's March Toward War and Depression.** A benefit for the Militant Fund. Speaker: Jacob Perasso, Young Socialists, member United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 271; Sunday May 4. Reception/brunch 11:00 a.m. Program 12 noon. 4229 S. Central Avenue. Suggested donation \$10. (323) 233-9372.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Oppose the Imperialist War Makers! Fight for a Socialist Future!** Benefit for the Militant Fund and celebration of launching of Washington, D.C. Bureau of the *Militant*. Speakers: Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant* and Sam Manuel, *Militant* Washington Bureau Chief. Sat., May 3. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Program 7:30 p.m. 3437 14th St. NW. Donation: Dinner \$5 Program \$5. (202) 387-1590.



# Strikers value 'Militant'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"There is huge support for this strike in the Jefferson area," said Becky Ellis. She is a member of a team of *Militant* supporters who have taken the international subscription drive to workers and students in the Midwest, and particularly to thousands of meat packers in the region. Her comments followed participation in the April 26 rally organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 538 to build solidarity with its strike against Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin (see front-page article).

The team's efforts are part of the eight-week international drive to sell subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, as well as copies of several issues of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, and the Pathfinder title, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes.

This was day four of the Midwest trip, explained Ellis. "On day one we set up a literature table at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and enjoyed a busy hour talking to students and selling a bunch of *Militants* and a Pathfinder title," she said. "Later we set up for two hours at the front gate of the Oscar Meyer packing plant in the city. Workers bought 34 copies of the *Militant*."

Ellis reports that a number of students and other young people have been joining the UFCW Local 538 picket line. At the April 26 rally a student from the University of Wisconsin in Madison bought a subscription on behalf of his socialist group.

"Now we're headed to Cherokee, Iowa, to sell the *Militant* to workers at a meatpacking plant there," Ellis said. "Tyson strikers, who have joined Truth Squads to build solidarity with their struggle, told us that workers at the plant had given \$2,000 at a plant gate collection."

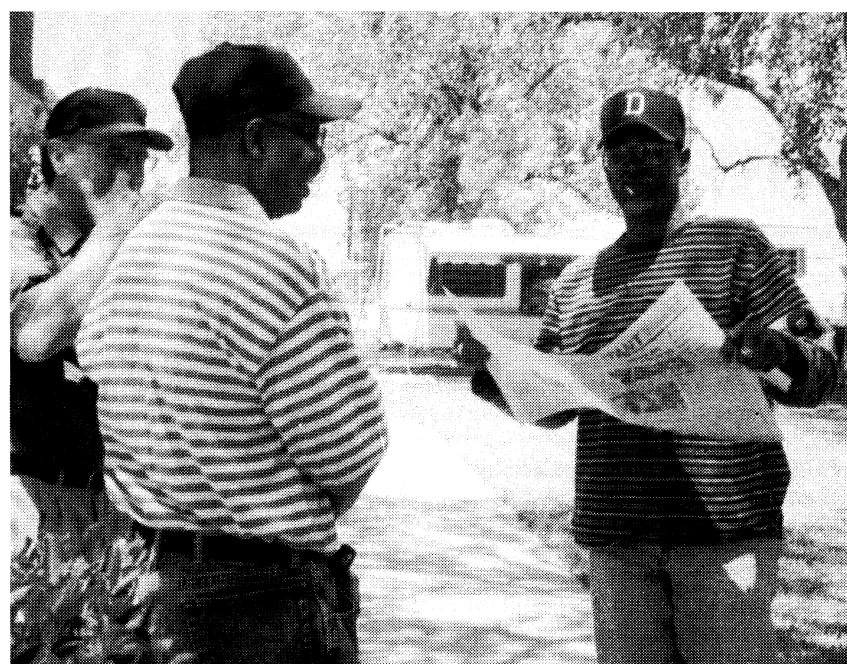
## Discussions on Iraq war

Ellis said that the *Militant's* editorial stance in opposition to Washington and London's assault on Iraq has sparked some civil disagreement. "Many of the young supporters of the strikers are against the war, but that's not the majority view in Jefferson," she said. "The manager of one local bar has printed a T-shirt with two slogans: 'Support Local 538' on the back and 'Support our Troops' on the front."

From Utah, Alyson Kennedy reported "big progress" for socialists working in the coal-mining industry with a renewal sold to a miner in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, an introductory subscription in a Birmingham coal mine, and five *PM* subs sold to miners in Utah.

Supporters of the socialist press in Charlotte, North Carolina, "picked up three *Militant* subs and one *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription in door-to-door campaigning," wrote Willie Cotton.

At the moment, the overall international ef-



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

**Striking Machinist at Ft. Worth, Texas, Lockheed Martin plant April 26 reading *Militant*. Five strikers bought introductory subscriptions to the paper.**

fort has fallen slightly behind the pace, in spite of the excellent results recorded by volunteers in Sydney, Australia; Vancouver, Canada; and a number of U.S. cities.

With more than 500 subscriptions or books sold to date, this column looks forward to receiving more stories of sales efforts and the discussions and experiences that are a part of them. Photographs of sales teams in action are also needed.

## Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 5-June 1: Week 3 of 8

Country	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CANADA</b>								
Vancouver	35	16	46%	5	2		15	8
Toronto	30	8	27%	5	1		25	1
Montreal	12	2	17%	4	4		15	6
<b>CANADA total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ICELAND</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>								
Christchurch	16	3	19%	1	0		4	0
Auckland	20	5	25%	1	0		5	0
<b>N.Z. total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>								
Stockholm	10	0	0%	2	0		4	0
Gothenburg	12	1	8%	2	0		8	2
<b>SWEDEN Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>								
London	40	9	23%	15	1		25	2
Cent. Scotland	12	1	8%	1	0		8	0
<b>UK total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>UNITED STATES</b>								
Des Moines	25	17	68%	12	3		12	1
Omaha	17	11	65%	31	11		17	7
San Francisco	35	19	54%	15	1		25	5
Houston	25	12	48%	10	0		25	0
Washington	25	12	48%	12	1		15	3
Newark	55	24	44%	20	11		30	12
Tucson	10	4	40%	2	1		6	0
Atlanta	35	14	40%	15	7		25	4
<b>NE Pennsylvania</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
Philadelphia	30	11	37%	7	4		10	0
Detroit	25	9	36%	8	1		12	1
Cleveland	20	7	35%	8	1		18	2
Twin Cities	45	15	33%	35	17		25	1
New York	100	32	32%	40	15		60	0
Miami	32	10	31%	10	0		25	4
Utah	10	3	30%	5	1		10	2
Seattle	30	9	30%	8	1		20	1
Chicago	40	12	30%	25	8		25	0
Charlotte	20	5	25%	8	2		16	2
Western Colorado	18	4	22%	12	7		10	3
Birmingham	20	4	20%	5	3		10	0
Tampa	25	5	20%	10	5		15	2
Boston	35	6	17%	15	0		25	0
Pittsburgh	30	5	17%	3	0		0	1
Los Angeles	45	7	16%	20	5		20	0
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>105</b>		<b>466</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>113</b>		<b>595</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>142</b>		<b>600</b>	<b>228</b>

## IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>								
AMIEU	4	2	50%				2	0
MUA	4	1	25%				2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>38%</b>				<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>CANADA</b>								
UFCW	9	3	33%	2	0		9	0
UNITE	4	0	0%	5	1		6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ICELAND</b>								
Efling	1	0	0%				1	0
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>								
MWU	2	0	0%				1	0
NDU	2	0	0%				1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UNITED STATES</b>								
UFCW	50	14	28%	75	20		40	5
UMWA	15	4	27%	4	5		10	0
UNITE	25	7	28%	20	4		20	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>7</b>

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

## Big push needed to meet fund goal

### Continued from front page

payments so far: nearly \$10,650. This puts us at \$33,582—40 percent of the international goal.

Two weeks are left in this campaign, however, posing a substantial challenge to collect and send in the more than \$50,000 in outstanding payments. Judging from the pledges, this is within reach, but it will take a concerted effort between now and May 12.

Campaigners in several areas are planning public fund events on the May 3 weekend or on the last weekend of the drive, which will be a major focus for raising contributions.

To bring the fund drive to a successful conclusion, additional steps are required. In each city, supporters of the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* Fund need to make progress on a day-to-day basis. Above all, this means calling or visiting every individual who has made a pledge and organizing to collect their payments.

This effort can be coupled with fund raising on the job, at plant gates, and on *Militant* sales tables in working-class neighborhoods and on campuses.

It's important to explain to every contributor, and potential contributor, that the *Militant* and the Spanish-language magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, are financed entirely by working people and others who look to it for news on revolutionary struggles. These two socialist periodicals are irreplaceable as a source of facts and a guide to working-class action.

This fund drive makes it possible to meet the basic weekly expenses of producing these publications—paying the printer, the landlord and utility companies, the postage and shipping services, as well as supplies. Payments come due every week, so the funds are needed now.

In addition, the fund allows the *Militant* to field special reporting teams to cover important developments in the class struggle around the country and internationally.

### Receptivity to 'Militant' and fund appeal

A good example of the response to the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* fund appeal was an April 27 benefit held in Houston. One of the speakers there was Joshua Lawrence, a student at the University of Houston and a new *Militant* reader.

Lawrence, who is working with four or five other students to visit Cuba in the upcoming Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, thanked the *Militant* for campaigning in defense of the Cuban Revolution. "My interest in going to Cuba," he said, "has to do with the obvious misinformation that all people here see in the U.S. news media. I want to go there myself and see what the truth is."

The meeting featured Socialist Workers Party leader Nan Bailey from Los Angeles. She presented a working-class explanation of the imperialist war drive in the Middle East, how it fits into the longer-term decline of the world imperialist system, and what it will take for fighting workers and farmers to bring down the world's final empire.

Bailey's talk was supplemented by a brief report from Jacquie Henderson, a socialist and

garment worker in Houston, on the strike by 4,000 Machinists standing up to Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas. She had just visited the picket line as part of a team of workers to express solidarity, and report on the struggle for the *Militant*.

More than \$1,000 was collected at the event. Another \$700 was pledged to the fund drive. After the meeting, organizers of the event received an e-mail message from a *Militant* reader thanking the paper for its coverage of the Lockheed strike, and pledging \$100 to the fund.

Please make checks or money orders payable to the *Militant* and send contributions to the *Militant*, 152 W. 36th Street #401, New York, NY 10018. Fund payments must be received in the *Militant* offices by noon on May 13 in order to be counted for the campaign.

## \$85,000 Militant Fund March 10-May 12: Week 7 of 9

	Goal	Paid	%
Charlotte NC	3,000	2,290	76%
Boston MA	2,800	1,905	68%
Cleveland OH	1,100	740	67%
Utah	800	500	63%
Seattle WA	6,000	3,738	62%
New York NY	7,500	4,398	59%
Philadelphia PA	3,000	1,455	49%
Los Angeles CA	7,500	3,585	48%
Washington DC	2,200	1,030	47%
Atlanta GA	4,100	1,880	46%
Miami FL	1,600	690	43%
Tucson AZ	250	100	40%
Des Moines IA	900	355	39%
Newark NJ	3,800	1,455	38%
Northeast PA	1,600	605	38%
Omaha NE	900	309	34%
Chicago IL	4,200	1,134	27%
Birmingham AL	2,500	590	24%
Detroit MI	3,000	700	23%
San Francisco CA	7,000	1,585	23%
Twin Cities MN	4,300	950	22%
Pittsburgh PA	3,000	610	20%
Houston TX	3,200	375	12%
Tampa FL	1,800	0	0%
Western CO	2,500	0	0%
Other	0	306	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>78,550</b>	<b>31,285</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>3,460</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>International total</b>	<b>85,860</b>	<b>33,582</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Int'l goal/Should be</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>66,300</b>	<b>78%</b>

# U.S. speeds up drive toward war with Iran

Continued from front page

Shiites there. "There is no question that the government of Iran has encouraged people to go into the country and that they have people in the country attempting to influence" events, said U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld April 25. "A vocal minority claiming to transform Iraq into Iran will not be permitted to do so."

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters April 23, "We've made clear to Iran that we would oppose any outside interference in Iraq.... [The] infiltration of agents to destabilize the Shiite population would clearly fall into that category."

In response to these accusations, Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi said at an April 23 news conference, "It is very interesting that the Americans have occupied Iraq but they accuse Iraq's neighbor of interfering in its affairs." He argued that "instead of raising accusations, the United States should adopt cooperation with Iran."

Kharrazi protested the cease-fire U.S. military officers signed with the Mujahedeen Khalq, a heavily armed Iranian opposition force that has carried out many cross-border attacks on Iran from its Iraqi bases. "If this news that [the Mujahedeen] can stay in Iraq and keep their arms is correct, it will expose the Americans' plans in the region," said Kharrazi.

The U.S. Central Command disclosed April 28 that U.S. forces had signed a cease fire with the Mujahedeen April 15. Under the deal, Washington pledged to halt raids on the group's camps. The Mujahedeen get to keep their arms as long as they refrain from firing on U.S. forces.

Washington had placed the group on its list of "terrorist" organizations in 1997, when U.S. president William Clinton tried a rapprochement with Tehran. The Bush administration had stuck by this approach. Until very recently, White House officials described the group as a "vicious entity that served as a de facto security organization for the Iraqi government," according to the *New York Times*. "An American military official said the group could provide intelligence regarding Iranian government activities both in Iraq, and in Iran itself," the April 29 *Times* reported.

Iran has been a target of imperialist hostility since workers and peasants in that country carried out a popular insurrection in 1979 against the U.S.-installed shah. The shah's bloody regime was, along with the Israeli

government, a pillar of imperialist domination and exploitation in the oil-rich region.

Oil workers and other working people provided the mass forces and much of the leadership in the battles that overthrew the monarchy in Iran. There were no working-class organizations, however, that were capable of leading the struggle for power.

The lack of such a proletarian organization was a legacy of earlier betrayals by the Stalinist movement. During a revolutionary upsurge in 1945-46, centered among working people in Azerbaijan, the leaders of the Stalinist Tudeh (Communist) Party joined the bourgeois government. This and other class-collaborationist actions paved the way for the defeat of the revolutionary movement, discrediting the party in the eyes of the working masses.

Three decades later, the leadership vacuum in the popular rebellion in 1978-79 was filled by bourgeois opposition forces—the anti-shah Muslim clerics, the most prominent of whom was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. They declared the new government an Islamic Republic, and oversaw the implementation of laws, couched in Islamic texts, designed to consolidate the domination of their wing of the capitalist class.

## Opposition to U.S.-led interim gov't

"We will first opt for a national political system, but eventually the Iraqi people will seek an Islamic republic system," said Abdelaziz al-Hakim of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, in an interview with Iranian television in mid-April. He called on Shiites to join the traditional pilgrimage to the ancient city of Karbala and to "oppose a U.S.-led interim administration and defend Iraq's independence."

The pilgrimage drew more than 1 million people from Baghdad, Mosul, and Najaf, as well as cities in the south. It became a celebration of Shiite identity, as well as a vehicle to call for the rapid exit of the imperialist forces.

The ceremony had been banned for decades under the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein and his predecessors. Each year, Baghdad mobilized its armed forces to cordon off Karbala and crack down on those who defied the government's prohibition. This was just one aspect of the systematic policy of persecution of the Shiite majority, who number some 16 million among the country's 24 million people.



A crowd of Iraqis faces U.S. military checkpoint in Baghdad, April 28. U.S. troops, with tanks and barbed wire, block access to Palestine Hotel. The protesters rallied to press for greater representation of Shiites in any new Iraqi interim government.

Those clerics who oppose the imperialist occupation and back the call for an Islamic Republic similar to the Iranian government have prevailed in several struggles for leadership, while those tarred with association with the Hussein government have been the targets of protests.

"We are in control of all of Iraq, especially central and southern Iraq, not only Baghdad," said Sadeq Abu Jafaar, an aide to Sheik Muhammad al-Fartusi, a prominent Shiite cleric based in eastern Baghdad.

Writing in the April 27 *New York Daily News*, columnist Michael Kramer called the Shiite movement "a nasty surprise the U.S. did not expect." Kramer quoted a U.S. State Department official who said, "We totally underestimated the degree to which many Shiites oppose us.... Their ability to begin organizing governmental operations in the current political vacuum is nothing short of astounding."

Kramer wasn't the only commentator in the big-business media to express concern. Liberal columnist Thomas Friedman complained in an April 27 piece in the *New York Times*, "No sooner is Saddam gone than up pops a group of Shiite clerics demanding that Iraq be turned into another Iran."

"Maybe these countries [like Iraq] are not real states, but are simply collections of tribes that can be controlled with only a fist, and the only options are an evil iron fist or a softer, more benign one," Friedman wrote.

## Instability in Kurdish areas

As the Shiite-led protests burst into the streets, retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, Washington's chief "civilian" administrator in Iraq, pointed to the regional governments in the Kurdish areas as "a model for the rest of Iraq." The main capitalist forces there, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), fully backed the U.S.-led war.

Garner played down reports that Kurdish soldiers were expelling Arabs who had been resettled in Kirkuk and other Kurdish areas by the Saddam Hussein government.

At the end of April, U.S. officials reported that over the previous week their soldiers had escorted a dozen Turkish Special Forces troops to the border after discovering them in an aid convoy that had entered Iraq from Turkey. The officials said they had seized military equipment, including dozens of assault rifles, hidden among the aid supplies. They also uncovered banners of the Iraqi Turkmen Front, the main political party of the Turkmen nationality.

Turkmen are about 5 percent of the Iraqi population. Turkmen Front official Kemal Yacili said that in light of the expulsion of several hundred Turkmen from Kirkuk, and the shooting deaths of some nine others in the area, "We have a right to ask for help from the outside."

The Turkish government has assembled troops near its border with northern Iraq as a bulwark against any upsurge in the movement for an independent republic among the Kurdish people in the region. The Kurdish population spans Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Armenia, and Syria, and has been denied its national rights by both the capitalist governments of the region and the competing imperialist powers.

Ankara is a member of the U.S.-dominated NATO, and boasts the largest armed forces among the military alliance's Euro-

pean members. At Washington's order, it held off any large-scale breach of its border with Iraq during the invasion and war.

Today the U.S.-led military occupation of Iraq is based on some 120,000 ground troops, including the 101st Airborne Division north of Mosul near the Turkish border; the Fourth Infantry Division around Tikrit and Kirkuk in the north; the Third Infantry Division around Baghdad; and the Marines in the south, along with tens of thousands of British troops, who are concentrated in and around Basra.

In Baghdad, the imperialist occupiers have sought to curb various capitalist politicians who have stepped into the political vacuum left by the regime's downfall. "The coalition alone retains absolute authority in Iraq," stated a proclamation issued April 23 by Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, commander of the U.S. and British ground forces, that was directed at Muhammad Mohsen Zobeidi and Ahmed Chalabi, two former exile politicians who have benefited from U.S. backing.

Accusing Chalabi and Zobeidi of taking credit for a railway construction project undertaken by the occupying forces, Maj. Gen. Albert Whitley warned, "Nobody has authority unless General McKiernan says so. Mr. Zobeidi and Mr. Chalabi have no authority. If we say you run the railroad, you run the railroad." Whitley is the senior British officer in the U.S. general's command.

Nevertheless, Chalabi, who has enjoyed strong backing from Rumsfeld and other Pentagon officials, was among the Iraqi politicians invited to "planning sessions" convened by Garner in Nasiriya April 28. Representatives of the KDP, the KUP, the pro-Iran Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and the Iraqi National Accord, were also invited, said U.S. officials.

## Stalinist party issues newspaper

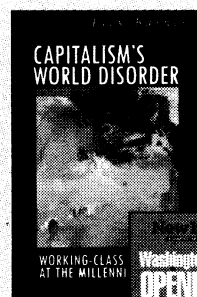
The Iraqi Communist Party, which had largely functioned in exile for decades, is one of the political groups that have re-emerged. The first publicly circulated issue of its newspaper appeared April 20.

"At last—the bloody, barbaric and repressive regime of Saddam Hussein has fallen!" the statement began. "With the collapse of the tyrant and his regime, the hopes and will of the overwhelming majority of our Iraqi people have been fulfilled."

While the article condemned "the war and the tragedies which it left behind," it left little doubt that the party considers the imperialist occupation to be a lesser evil than the maintenance of Saddam Hussein's rule. While criticizing the occupying forces for failing to provide "clean water, electricity, medicine and food" and to stop the looting, the CP paper stated, "There is no doubt that it was the invasion...which made it possible to smash the regime's military capabilities." The writers also called for "an interim UN administration" that would supervise the construction of a "coalition government."

Although the Iraqi CP was forced underground for long periods by the Baathist regime, party leaders served in Hussein's cabinet for a period from 1972, following the signing of a 15-year treaty with Moscow. True to its Stalinist politics, the CP supported the regime's crushing of a Kurdish rebellion. The Kurdish fighters were "hostile to the progressive political line of the national authority," wrote the party's leader of the time.

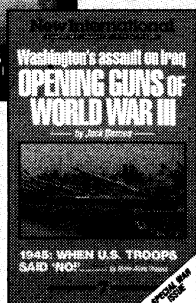
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# U.S. holds minors at Guantánamo prison camp

BY SAM MANUEL

U.S. military officials have admitted to holding at least three boys between the ages of 13 and 15 at their concentration camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The youths have been held and interrogated for more than a year, meaning that at least one was as young as 12 when first taken prisoner. Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, the commander of the joint task force at Guantánamo, described them as "juvenile enemy combatants."

Like the adult prisoners in the camp, the youths are being held indefinitely. They would not be granted access to lawyers, said military spokesman Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, and would remain behind bars "until we ensure that they're no longer a threat to the United States, that there's no pending law enforcement against them, [and] that they're no longer of intelligence value."

One youth is Canadian, reported the Toronto *Globe and Mail*. Wounded and captured during a firefight in Afghanistan, he is accused of throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. soldier. Canadian authorities have been refused access to the youth. U.S. officials claim that the boy's father is a "senior financial leader" of Al Qaeda, the London *Guardian* reported.

Most of the 660 inmates at Guantánamo were brought to the prison in the months immediately following the U.S. war on Afghanistan. Many were shackled and blindfolded for the 24-hour flight from

Afghanistan and originally held in outdoor wire-fence cages.

The U.S. government has since built the more permanent Camp Delta facility. Each cell has a through-the-floor toilet, a sink, and a metal bed. Denial of exercise time and reading material is used as a "disciplinary tool," said Cmd. Sgt. Maj. John Vannatta, the superintendent of the prison, who in civilian life is a superintendent of an Indiana state penitentiary.

There have been 25 suicide attempts by 17 individuals since the prison opened. More than 5 percent of those detained are being treated with antidepressants. Authorities at the prison have denied that there is any relationship between the attempted suicides and the indefinite nature of the detentions.

The father of Halima Ghezali, a Swedish citizen being held at the prison, told the *New York Times* that Swedish intelligence officials who had visited his son informed him that U.S. authorities believed he had no connection to any "illegal" group. "So why is he there so long?" asked Ghezali.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said that the prisoners are "being held not necessarily for what they had done but for what they might do," commented the *Times*.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have condemned the imprisonment of juveniles. "The detention of children under these circumstances is particularly repugnant and flouts basic prin-



Prisoner at Guantánamo camp on U.S. naval base—on soil occupied by Washington against will of Cuban people—taken for "interrogation" by U.S. Marines.

ciples for the protection of human rights under international law," said William Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International in the United States April 23.

U.S. officials say that about 150 prisoners are from Saudi Arabia, and that there

are also 83 Yemenis and 52 Pakistanis. Inmates come from 42 countries.

Washington has maintained a naval base at Guantánamo, the site of the prison, in spite of repeated protests by the Cuban government over the past four decades.

## Cuban president details U.S. gov't provocations

Continued from Page 4

Cuban and U.S. governments signed in 1994 after the so-called "rafters" crisis.

### The 1994 'rafters' crisis

On August 5 of that year, a riot broke out, initiated by groups of people who had gathered on the Malecón, Havana's waterfront, hoping that a boat would be hijacked, which they could use to get to the United States. Tensions had been building that summer, during the most difficult year of what the Cubans call the "Special Period." It was marked by severe scarcities of food, fuel, and other basic necessities in Cuba due to the collapse of trade agreements with the former Soviet Union. The hardships were exacerbated by Washington's economic war.

There had been a series of boat hijackings by Cubans seeking to reach the shores of Florida, and who saw little hope of being granted visas by Washington. Hijackers had killed a police officer and a navy lieutenant in their attempts to take over vessels. The White House admitted those responsible for these crimes, while denying virtually anyone a legal route into the United States.

Thwarted in their August 5 hijacking attempt, a crowd of a few hundred people swarmed along the Malecón throwing rocks and breaking hotel and store windows. They were met by thousands of Cuban workers, who turned out in a show of support for the revolution. Cuban president Fidel Castro personally came to the scene and the confrontation was peacefully defused.

Speaking at a rally later that year, Castro said, referring to the August 5 events, "What did our enemies abroad and their allies inside our country want? They aimed to provoke a bloody confrontation, to force us to use weapons. And we do have weapons, indeed millions of people in this country are armed, and they are the ones who defend the revolution. But we have weapons only to fight the enemies from abroad and to defend ourselves against anyone who tries to shoot at revolutionaries inside Cuba."

The same day, the Cuban president announced that, given Washington's role in encouraging hijackings, Cuba would not be pushed into trying to stop those wishing to leave. It would instead allow the departure of all those seeking to get to the United States, whether they had permission from Washington or not.

During the next month, some 30,000 Cubans left by raft and boat, hoping to reach Florida. The U.S. government quickly reversed its policy of openly fomenting the illegal entries. U.S. president William Clinton dispatched a naval flotilla to intercept the rafters and jammed thou-

sands of Cubans into miserable prison camps at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo—Cuban territory occupied by Washington against the will of the Cuban people. Virtually all were eventually admitted to the United States. Clinton also imposed sanctions against Cuba, such as suspending remittances by Cuban-Americans to their relatives on the island and halting direct charter flights to Cuba.

In September of that year, the White House was forced to agree to grant a minimum of 20,000 visas per year to Cubans applying to emigrate.

Cuban government officials have pointed out recently that Washington is not meeting its part of the agreement. It is falling short of its annual quota of 20,000 visas by substantial numbers, even though requests regularly exceed this level. Last year, for example, the U.S. Interests Section granted 18,000 visas, according to the Cuban foreign minister. In the first five months of this year, which for immigration purposes begins in October, Washington granted only 505 visas.

Castro implied that the U.S. government could be trying to provoke another exodus like the one in 1994, which could "serve as a pretext for military aggression against Cuba."

On April 17, Washington used the recent arrests and trials in Cuba to escalate its anti-Cuba campaign, announcing it may impose new sanctions against Cuba, including cutting off remittances by Cuban-Americans to their families in Cuba and suspending direct flights from the United States to the island. A *New York Times* article in which the measures were first reported, stated, "The [U.S.] president is expected to issue a stern warning to the Havana government that the United States will not tolerate another exodus of rafters, the officials said. Several times during Mr. Castro's 44-year tenure, most notably in 1980 and 1994, he has relieved internal tensions by allowing mass migrations to Florida."

According to an article in the April 24 *Washington Post*, well-placed officials also said that "one of the most draconian proposals would be suspending a bilateral migration agreement negotiated in 1994-95 after the last mass outpouring of 'rafters.'"

### U.S. lets hijackers off the hook

In a March 19 televised address, Castro pointed out that the perpetrators of the first four hijackings beginning last August walk free in the streets of Miami. While U.S. authorities charged those who hijacked the passenger aircraft that day with "piracy", they refused to return the plane. On April

10, U.S. courts released these hijackers on bail.

"Why do these people leave?" Castro asked, in his March 19 broadcast. "Because they are absolutely certain of their impunity. Why do these people leave, in addition to the certainty of their impunity? Because they are welcomed there as heroes and used as raw material for anti-Cuban propaganda. They leave because there is a law, in effect for 37 years now, called the Cuban Adjustment Act, a murderous law—as we define it—that has cost thousands of lives and created countless problems."

The Cuban president compared Washington's course to the actions taken by Havana in relation to similar incidents over the years. "Dozens and dozens of American planes were hijacked and brought to Cuba, and not a single one was ever kept here," he said. "They stayed here long enough for refueling and were sent back immediately." By contrast, he noted, "It has now become customary for any airplane hijacked from Cuba to be seized: an incentive for potential hijackers and deranged people."

"Experience shows that when the perpetrators know they have no alternative" to being returned to the country where they committed their act of piracy, Castro also noted in his April 25 speech, "they abstain from committing such crimes. This was shown irrefutably in September 1980, when two individuals, in this case unfortunately of Cuban origin, hijacked a U.S. passenger plane and commandeered it to Cuba in spite of the timely warnings issued by us against such an action. They were immediately sent back to the United States. No U.S. plane has ever again been hijacked to Cuba in 22 years."

The Cuban president also announced that "no hijacked plane or boat will ever again be given fuel to continue its journey to the United States or any other country, and the hijackers should know that they will be subjected to summary proceedings in the appropriate courts and that they should not expect clemency from the Council of State.... This is also a very hard measure, but it is unavoidable, as we need to definitively put an end to these actions."

Castro described in detail the April 2 hijacking of a passenger ferry from the Havana harbor. Eleven people armed with a handgun and knives took over the vessel, holding 29 hostages on board. The boat sailed 30 miles off the Cuban coast where it ran out of fuel, in the middle of a gale, "in serious danger of capsizing," Castro said. A Cuban Coast Guard boat managed to attach a rope to the ferry's bow and towed it to-

ward the port of Mariel. "The hijackers, who did not oppose the rescue operation," Castro said, "continued to hold a highly aggressive attitude, threatening to kill the hostages if they were not given fuel when they docked. They held their knives to the throats of several women every time they demanded something. Only 40 hours into the hijacking, with the cooperation of the hostages themselves who began jumping into the water, all were rescued unharmed. It was not necessary to board the vessel, which would have been done as a last resort."

### Executions of three ferry hijackers

The 11 hijackers were arrested April 3. They were tried five days later and convicted on charges of having committed "grave acts of terrorism" under Cuba's Law Against Terrorism, passed in December 2001. Three of them were given the death penalty and, after the Supreme Court and Council of State upheld the sentences, were executed April 11. Four hijackers were given life in prison, and the rest were sentenced to one- to five-year terms.

"The vile propaganda of imperialism and its allies has insisted that those who were executed were so-called 'dissidents,'" deliberately lumping together their cases with the arrests and trials of the 75 convicted of aiding Washington's economic war on Cuba, Castro said.

"Not one of them was even sentenced to life imprisonment," the Cuban president said, referring to the 75, "which is what the Miami courts did to the five Cuban heroes imprisoned by the empire for fighting against the terrorist acts with which the United States has inundated our country."

Castro was referring to five Cuban revolutionaries convicted in a federal court in Miami in 2001 on various charges, including failing to register as an agent of a foreign power, conspiracy to commit espionage for Havana and, in one case, conspiracy to commit murder. These five Cuban patriots were given sentences ranging from 15 years to a double-life term in prison. From February 28, they were thrown into solitary confinement for a month after an order by the U.S. attorney general, on the grounds that, with U.S. military action against Iraq pending, they were potential threats to "national security" because of their contact with visitors and many correspondents. The five were let out of the "hole" April 2, as Washington prepared to ratchet up its anti-Cuba campaign over the arrests of the 75.

One of the three hijackers sentenced to death had been previously indicted 15

Continued on Page 10

# Getting jobs key to fight for women's rights

Printed below is an excerpt from Part 1 of the three-part series *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation*, one of Pathfinder's April Books of the Month. These three Education for Socialists bulletins, says Mary-Alice Waters in the introduction, "draw together in one place some of the most important resolutions, reports, and articles that come out of the active involvement of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in the fight for women's rights since a new feminist movement arose at the end of the 1960s. A product of the deep-going economic and social changes that began with Washington's preparations for entry into

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

World War II, the 'second wave' of feminism was one of the powerful components of the radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s that profoundly affected the working class and changed political consciousness on an even broader scale." The selection below is taken from the introduction to *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, by Mary-Alice Waters, who is the editor of these bulletins and president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, capitalist expansion and the lash of competi-

tion have dictated the incorporation of larger and larger numbers of women into the labor force. This is so because capital always seeks to incorporate into the work force large numbers of workers in oppressed social categories (in this case women), the value of whose labor power under capitalism is less than that of others. This is a key way in which the employers drive down the overall average value of labor power by heightening competition among workers for jobs.

The development of capitalism, however, creates real—and ultimately insoluble—contradictions for the exploiting class. The capitalists' increasing purchase of women's capacities as wage laborers inevitably brings in its wake greater economic independence for women. It contributes to further disintegration of the family, and expands the need for the household appliances and prepared foods noted above. These factors, in turn, tend to raise the value of women's labor power, to raise the wages they can command in the labor market on average, other things being equal.

Through their experiences in the work force and the unions, women in growing numbers also begin to think in broader social terms and to act as political beings. They become increasingly class conscious. They play an expanding role in struggles by the labor movement that can wrest higher wages from the employers and social programs from the capitalist government, thus pushing up the value of labor power for the entire working class.

These were the kinds of economic and social developments that took place in the decades of the post-World War II capitalist expansion, weakening the foundations on which the entire edifice of women's oppression is built. As these objective preconditions combined with the political changes of the 1950s and 1960s—above all, the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements—the "second wave" of feminism exploded onto the scene.

As a result of the women's liberation struggles since the end of the 1960s, further broad advances have taken place in women's attitudes toward themselves and their place in society, as well as in the views of men on these matters.

The period of accelerated post-World War II capitalist expansion came to an end in the

mid-1970s. As this took place, the shifts in the economic and social conditions of women, and the changing attitudes and expectations accompanying them, increasingly clashed with the economic interests—that is, the profits—of the U.S. ruling class. This conflict lies beneath the political and ideological campaign directed against women's rights that we are now living through, just as a similar conflict led to the reactionary promotion of the "feminine mystique" in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Today the employers are once again making a concerted political effort to roll back, or at least slow down, some of the changes in consciousness about women's place in society. They are taking aim at concrete gains won through hard struggle in the 1960s and 1970s, such as abortion rights and affirmative action programs.

The goal of the bosses and their government is not to drive women out of the labor force, but to undermine their class consciousness and political self-confidence. The goal is to make women more willing to acquiesce in attacks on wages, working conditions, social services, affirmative action programs, and equality on the job. In this way, the employers are attempting to hold back the increase in the value of women's labor power (and thereby that of the class as a whole), and to enforce greater discipline and "productivity" by imposing speedup and more dangerous working conditions.

These attacks on women's rights are part of a broader offensive that the U.S. capitalist class has been waging for more than a decade. The target is all working people, and all those whose race, sex, language, or national origin is used by the ruling class to single them out for superexploitation and special oppression. The employers are determined to fundamentally shift the relationship of forces between capital and labor that was established following the post-



"Through their experiences in the work force and the unions, women...begin to think in broader social terms and to act as political beings."

World War II strike wave.

This intensifying capitalist offensive began with the 1974-75 world recession and picked up steam with the 1980-82 recession. It is directed against the wages, job conditions, democratic rights, and organizations of the working class. It is aimed at heading off progress toward political independence by the working class—toward any notion that labor should develop and fight for its own positions on social and political questions, independent of and opposed to those of the bosses and bosses' parties.

## April BOOKS OF THE MONTH

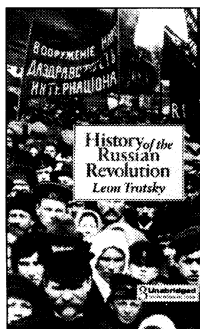
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# Airline bosses use fraud of bankruptcy to cut wages, benefits

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO—One after the other, major U.S. airlines have been using the fraud of “bankruptcy” to justify slashing wages and benefits, and attacking the job conditions, of wage workers. The two largest carriers, American Airlines and United Airlines, are leading the onslaught.

At American, the nation’s largest carrier, pilots and ground workers voted April 15 to accept their part of \$1.8 billion in cuts in annual wages and benefits. It was a close call. Flight attendants at first rejected the proposal by a narrow margin. Afterwards American’s chief executive, Donald Carty, growled, “If we fail to secure flight attendant ratification by tomorrow, we are—regrettably—left with no alternative but to immediately file for bankruptcy.”

The next day the flight attendants voted again, this time accepting the six-year concession package.

In the deal, American’s 12,000 pilots are taking a 23 percent pay cut in the first year, and a 17 percent cut in subsequent years. The 34,000 mechanics and baggage handlers face 16 percent pay reductions and other unspecified concessions that will save the company \$620 million. The pay scales of the 24,000 flight attendants will be 16 percent lower. In addition, the company will eliminate up to 7,500 jobs.

The agreement was called into question almost immediately after the company’s delayed disclosure of a trust fund it had set up to protect the pensions of 45 top executives if American went into bankruptcy, and plans to pay millions of dollars in bonuses to the company’s top seven executives.

Facing workers’ outrage at the revelations, Carty canceled the bonuses and publicly apologized. Also feeling the heat, union officials refused to sign off on the accord.

The company then offered to sweeten the concession package, shortening the contract to five years from six, and putting bonuses for union workers on the same terms as management.

After Carty’s forced resignation, this package was voted up by the pilots, ground workers, and flight attendants.

Over the last two years airline workers have faced repeated attacks on their wages, benefits, and working conditions. But the threats of even greater cuts, or even liquidation of the company, which management used to justify its proposals, convinced the majority to vote for concessions.

Federal bankruptcy judges in the past have voided labor contracts and unilaterally slashed wages and benefits to satisfy banks and other creditors. Since last September, the management at United Airlines has successfully used this threat to force the unions to vote for concessions three times.

## United union tops capitulate to bosses

In November 2002, American claimed that over \$1 billion per year in wage and benefits concessions would be needed to convince the Air Transportation Stabilization Board to grant a government-secured

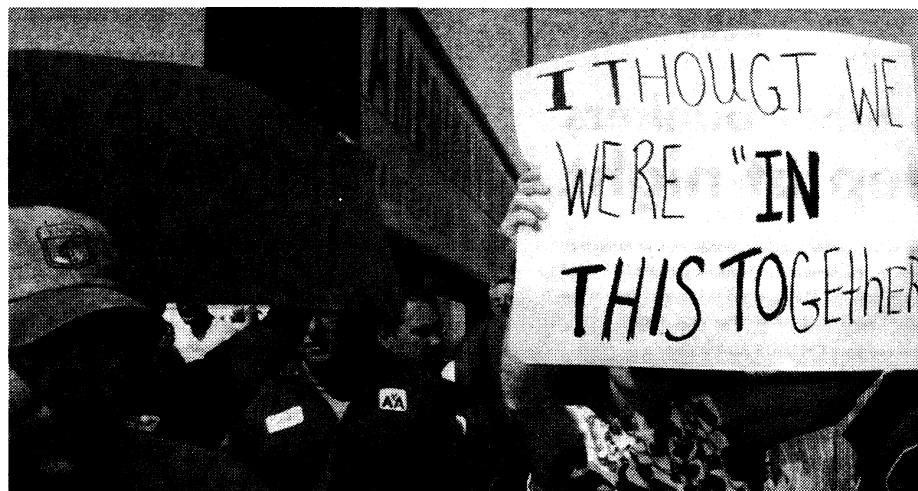
loan the company needed to satisfy creditors. Unions representing the pilots, baggage handlers, customer service workers, and flight attendants voted to accept company demands, while the mechanics rejected the plan.

Deeming the cuts insufficient, however, the federal board rejected the airline’s loan request. On Dec. 9, 2002, United filed for bankruptcy protection. Two weeks later, the company called on the unions to approve temporary takebacks it claimed were necessary to maintain operations until a final agreement was reached.

Concessions in that interim period would be more than double the levels demanded in November, or \$2.4 billion a year. Wage cuts amounted to 29 percent for pilots, 9 percent for flight attendants, and 13 percent for flight dispatchers and meteorologists. Members of these four unions voted to approve the cuts.

The International Association of Machinists (IAM), however, which organizes the mechanics, cabin cleaners, baggage handlers, and customer service, rejected the offer and refused to put it to a vote by its members. By mid-January, U.S. bankruptcy judge Eugene Wedoff imposed a 14 percent pay cut on the IAM membership retroactive to New Year’s Day.

In the latest round of negotiations, United is once again using the club of bankruptcy to its advantage in the negotiations. It had an April 14 court date set to hear its motion requesting the judge nullify all union contracts. The \$2.54 billion annual wage and benefit reductions in the six-year contracts are to come from the approximately 8,000 pilots, 40 meteorologists, 180 flight controllers, 13,000 mechanics, 24,000 ramp and customer service workers, and 22,000 flight attendants working for United. After the leaderships of all the unions involved approved the cutbacks by April 11, United announced it would withdraw its motion to annul the contracts.



American Airlines workers protest April 18 in front of maintenance facilities in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In addition to wage cuts, the company raised employee payments to health-care costs, changed work rules, outsourced maintenance and cleaning jobs, and increased the amount of part-time work—all under the club of “bankruptcy.”

In addition to wage cuts, the tentative agreements include increased employee payments to health-care costs, changes in work rules, significant outsourcing of maintenance and cabin cleaning jobs, and an expansion of part-time work. Workers at American in Chicago and Miami report to the *Militant* that a 10-year wage progression has been added for cabin service workers and new hires on the ramp.

Now the union ranks will decide on ratifying the concessions. Voting is to be completed by April 29. The pilots have already given their nod of approval.

## IAM at United faces decertification

IAM union officials argue that this capitulation to the bosses is preferable to the liquidation of the company and loss of tens of thousands of jobs. This will be an issue in the decertification election scheduled for this summer, in which mechanics at United will decide if they want to remain in the IAM or be represented by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), which has split mechanics from the IAM at Northwest and smaller carriers. AMFA claims it has never agreed to any concessions.

The IAM won an out-of-court settlement against United over its furloughing of 1,110 mechanics at the Indianapolis maintenance base in violation of the terms of the union contract. United agreed to relocate the mechanics at company expense. However, the company still plans to close the base and lay off more than 1,100 me-

chanics and 2,300 flight attendants.

Since United, the second-largest airline, entered bankruptcy protection last December, nearly all its competitors have reopened contracts to extract greater concessions from their workers. Under this relentless onslaught, also called “preemptive bargaining,” the airline unions have lost many of the gains of the last decades.

At the end of March, US Airways emerged from bankruptcy after winning \$1 billion in wage cuts and other concessions. It announced further layoffs of 890 flight attendants by June.

Leo Mullin, chief executive of the third-largest carrier, Delta Air Lines, described “productive” talks with its pilots union about lowering wages and benefits that will be “moving forward with a sense of urgency.”

The same week, Northwest Airlines, the fourth-ranked carrier, reported cuts of 4,900 additional jobs. Continental, the fifth-largest airline, is laying off 1,200 workers.

Airline business executives blame diminishing profit margins on a two-year slide in business travel, competition from discount carriers, fewer passengers due to the war, and empty planes on Asian flights resulting from travelers’ fear of the pneumonia-like disease known as SARS.

Aiming to reverse these losses, the bosses will continue to use the “bankruptcy” club they have been wielding, with the help of the government and bankruptcy courts, to try to keep their wallets fat while slashing the living standards of airline workers.

# Róger Calero speaks at National Lawyers Guild regional conference in Iowa

Continued from front page  
and Customs Enforcement is now attempting to deport Jamal.

Calero, an editor of the Spanish-language monthly magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, was invited to address the NLG conference as the guest speaker at a Saturday lunch held at the Drake University Law Clinic.

Michael Worrall, law student and co-chair of the Drake University NLG, the conference host, introduced Calero to the gathering. Worrall described Calero’s arrest and subsequent attempts by U.S. immigration authorities to deport him.

“The use of many of the laws against immigrants, including the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, adopted under the William Clinton administration, has deepened the attacks against all workers,” Calero told the participants. “The police agencies of the U.S. government can now deport you on the most minor of convictions going back decades. By applying these laws retroactively, Washington has deported tens of thousands of immigrants.”

“These laws have nothing whatsoever to do with eliminating ‘terrorism’ or promoting ‘democracy,’” Calero said. “The employers and their government are simply using them to justify divisions among working people and making it more difficult for workers to resist the bosses’ takeback demands and unify and look for allies.”

Caroline Palmer, president of the Minnesota NLG, gave a presentation on “The New McCarthyism.” She gave an overview of Washington’s domestic counterintelligence programs from the mid 1940s to the present day. Spying and disruption have been used to intimidate, discredit, and dis-

rupt political individuals, their organizations, and activities, she said.

“The targets of the FBI and other police agencies in the 1960s and 1970s included the American Indian Movement, the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, Black nationalist groups, and other organizations that were active against the U.S. war on Vietnam and against fascist organizations, and groups that supported women and gay rights and environmental issues.”

“Bringing those government police disruption tactics up to date,” Palmer continued, “the New York City Police Department created a database that includes information about prior political activity of those who protested against the war in Iraq at the New York Feb. 15, 2003, demonstration. Some of those arrested at that rally were asked where they went to school, their membership in any organizations, and involvement in past protest.”

“The executive branch of the federal government is using its power more frequently to go around Congress and the Constitution, especially since Sept. 11, 2001,” said Erlinder. “But history has shown that the people of the United States will confront such policies.”

The antidemocratic laws and policies Washington is using today have their foundations “prior to 9/11,” Calero stated. “The bosses and their government know that working people will resist and defend the gains of the past. Many workers will refuse to subordinate their struggles to help the employers make more profit off our backs.”

Calero described the strike by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 538 members in Jefferson, Wisconsin, as one such example.

Calero encouraged participants “to get

involved in supporting these workers and other struggles that will reinforce the fights of working people today and better prepare us for the bigger battles coming in the near future.”

Other speakers included Ben Stone, executive director of Iowa’s Civil Liberties Union; Allison Brown, regional attorney, Justice For Our Neighbors; and Ed Leahy, coordinator of Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa-Nebraska. These groups have recently endorsed the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

## For more information or to send a contribution:

Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; phone/fax, (212) 563-0585. Or you can visit the committee on its web site at: [www.calerodefense.org](http://www.calerodefense.org)

Send messages demanding exclusion moves against Calero be dropped to: Demetrios Georgakopoulos, Director, Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement. Fax messages to: (973) 645-3074; or mail to: 970 Broad St., Newark, NJ 07102. Copies should be sent to the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

## The Eastern Airlines Strike Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists

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# Repeal Cuban Adjustment Act!

In an April 25 presentation broadcast on national Cuban television, President Fidel Castro detailed many of the facts on the escalation of armed hijackings of planes and boats to the United States that have taken place in recent months. These facts, usually omitted from reports in the U.S. big-business media, show how Washington's policies aimed at the overthrow of the Cuban Revolution are designed to incite these acts of piracy, which endanger the lives of countless innocent men, women, and children and provide a pretext for U.S. imperialist actions.

Since August of last year, seven armed hijackings have taken place on the island at an accelerating pace—the last three within a two-week period from mid-March to the beginning of April. U.S. officials have refused to prosecute the perpetrators or even return the stolen planes and boats. Cuban officials cite evidence of an additional 29 attacks that were planned but foiled. No new incidents have been reported since the Cuban courts tried and convicted those who carried out an April 2 ferry hijacking and hostage seizure. Three of the attackers were sentenced to death and eight to prison.

Washington's long-established policy, codified some 37 years ago in the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, is to automatically grant permanent residency within a year to any Cuban who sets foot on the sand of Florida's shores, whether by hijacking a plane or boat, hiring a smuggler, or risking a crossing of the Florida Straits aboard a flimsy raft. The enticement has cost the lives of many Cubans who have drowned at sea. This law singling out Cuba—it is not applied to any other country—is combined with the U.S. government's policy of deliberately granting far fewer visas to Cubans than are provided for in the 1994 immigration accords between Washington and Havana. Together, these provocative policies are a spur to acts of armed piracy.

In contrast, Cuban policy is designed to prevent hijackings from the United States to the island and seeks to normalize relations between the two countries. In the early years of the Cuban Revolution, hijackings of planes from the United States to Cuba were not an uncommon occurrence, often carried out by victims of racist laws and law enforcement officials targeting those involved in the mass struggles that eventually put an end to the Jim Crow segregation that reigned in the U.S. South. Despite the fact that those who violated international laws against air piracy were prosecuted and served time in Cuban prisons, the hijackings continued until September 1980, when the Cuban government took the decision to return to the United States two Cuban-Americans who had commandeered a U.S. plane to Havana. No U.S. aircraft has been hijacked to Cuba since then.

The April 11 execution of three Cubans convicted of armed piracy in the ferry incident—a decision taken, according to Cuban president Fidel Castro, to “definitively put an end to these actions”—is now being used by the U.S. government as one of the pretexts for new acts of aggression against Cuba. The measures being considered include a cutoff of remittances by Cuban-Americans to their families on the island, the elimination of direct flights to Cuba, and the suspension of the 1994 immigration accords. Along with an already announced decision to eliminate “people-to-people” licenses that allow thousands of U.S. residents to visit Cuba each year, these actions register a new escalation of Washington's hostile measures against the Cuban people.

The indefinite imprisonment of some 660 people under subhuman conditions, with no charges, at a concentration camp established at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo—territory occupied against the will of the Cuban people—constitutes another ongoing provocation against Cuba as well as an assault on the democratic rights of U.S. working people won through centuries of struggle. This week the *Militant* covers the story of three minors—cynically labeled “juvenile enemy combatants” by their captors—who are among the Guantánamo prisoners.

Meanwhile, the brutal treatment of five Cuban revolutionaries who are serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and, in one case, murder, also reveals the true face of Washington's concern for “justice” and “human rights.”

The recent attacks and provocations against Cuba are one more chapter in the 44-year-long campaign by Washington to undermine and overthrow the Cuban Revolution. The reason for this implacable hostility is that the U.S. rulers fear and hate the example that the Cuban people and their revolutionary government set for workers and farmers around the world. Cuba shows it is possible for working people to make a socialist revolution—in the process transforming society and themselves—enabling them to defend their sovereignty and independence for decades in face of the world's mightiest imperialist power.

We urge you to join with others who oppose Washington's policy of aggression against Cuba in campaigning to demand:

Repeal the Cuban Adjustment Act!  
End all U.S. restrictions on trade with and travel to Cuba!  
Free the Cuban Five!  
Normalize diplomatic relations with Havana!  
U.S. out of Guantánamo!

# U.S. hands off Iran!

Even before their military assault on Iraq was officially over, the U.S. rulers were escalating their drive to war against Iran. U.S. officials have stepped up their threats and, among other hostile actions, signed a deal with an armed Iranian opposition group based in Iraq.

As part of their push to secure their plunder of the Mideast and their strategic bases in the region, the U.S. rulers aim to crush the gains and legacy of the Iranian revolution. Through a popular insurrection led by oil and other workers in 1979, Iran's toilers overthrew the brutal regime of the shah—installed by the CIA in a 1953 coup—until then a pillar of imperialist domination in a region that straddles the Middle East and South Asia.

Working people around the world should oppose this drive toward a new war of conquest.

A military offensive against Iran won't be the cakewalk for Washington that its march on Baghdad was. Because of their revolutionary victory and the blows they dealt imperialism two decades ago, workers and farmers in Iran are in a much stronger position to fight a U.S.-led assault. The same is true of the north Korean workers state, which is also in Washington's crosshairs.

In the weeks since the disintegration of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime, the government in Tehran and pro-Iranian forces inside Iraq have taken the initiative in the protests against the imperialist occupation. They have presented themselves as a voice for the widespread opposition to the U.S. and British presence, especially among Shiites in the south.

As in 1979, the absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership capable of organizing a struggle for power has opened the way for Islamic clerics to play a prominent role today in Iraq. The dominance of these

bourgeois political figures, who call for the formation of an “Islamic republic” as they speak out against the occupation, gives a warped character to the leadership of the popular masses who resist imperialism.

Not only in Iraq and Iran but throughout the Mideast, workers and farmers have no leadership that represents their interests. In that political vacuum, bourgeois nationalist organizations waving an Islamic banner have assumed a prominent role, from Algeria to Lebanon. In the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for example, Hamas has gained increasing authority as the Palestine Liberation Organization has become bourgeoisified over the past two decades, moving further and further away from its roots as a revolutionary nationalist organization that earlier led the struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine.

The historic betrayals of working people by Stalinism bear an important responsibility for the leadership challenges facing the toilers of the Mideast. Articles in recent issues of the *Militant* have described the way the pro-Moscow Communist Parties in both Iran and Iraq carried out a course of class collaboration, handing the leadership of the fight for national liberation to capitalist forces.

The 1979 Iranian revolution was betrayed, but the toilers have not been crushed and Tehran has been unable to stamp out the gains workers and farmers made in overthrowing the shah. Divisions exist today among the capitalist rulers in Iran, as well as among other like-minded political forces in the region. This situation means that class-conscious workers have space to function and discuss world politics with fellow toilers.

Today, millions of working people throughout the Middle East are discussing how to oppose imperialist designs on the region and defend their class interests, as Washington, London, Paris, and other imperialist powers drive toward more assaults in the region and, ultimately, toward war with each other.

In these struggles, the place for working people in this country is by the side of our fellow workers and farmers in Iran, as well as in every other country targeted by Washington and its competitors.

All imperialist troops out of the Mideast!  
End the U.S.-British occupation of Iraq!  
U.S. hands off Iran!

# Castro speaks

Continued from Page 7

times on criminal offenses and served jail time on several occasions, Castro said. The other two had also been convicted several times for petty crimes, including one assault on a construction worker with a knife.

“We were not happy to apply the death penalty,” the Cuban president said. “We looked at it as a matter of life or death.... If revolutionaries do not defend themselves, their cause is defeated, and they pay with their lives. In this case, the lives of millions of people in this country” would be at stake. Cuba has used capital punishment sparingly, Castro noted. The last time such a sentence was handed down for a similar act was during the 1997 bombings of tourist hotels in Havana. Washington recruited several agents from Guatemala, El Salvador, and elsewhere and paid each of them \$5,000 to enter Cuba and plant the bombs, Castro said. The perpetrators were sentenced to death but have not been executed, he stated.

Up to May 2000 “the death penalty was in use for common crimes” of a particularly brutal or abhorrent kind, Castro continued. Since then Cuban authorities have implemented a “sort of moratorium” on capital punishment.

“We are moving toward a future in our country when we might be able to abolish the death penalty, not simply on philosophical grounds, but out of profound feelings of justice and humanity,” Castro stated.

The execution of the three ferry hijackers was met with a “greater lack of understanding internationally” than the convictions of the 75, the Cuban president said.

## Debate on the Cuban measures

As Washington used these actions by the Cuban government to justify an escalation of its propaganda war against the Cuban Revolution, many liberal critics of U.S. foreign policy have joined the big-business chorus denouncing Havana.

On April 23, Brian Alexander, the executive director, and the board of directors of the Cuba Policy Foundation—a group that included former U.S. diplomats and others advocating expanded trade and contacts with Cuba—resigned in protest of what a statement by the foundation called “the regime's sudden, wholesale repression of human rights.”

A number of academic and political figures who had earlier spoken out against Washington's economic war on Cuba, have also now joined the imperialist-orchestrated chorus. Two dozen such individuals signed a Campaign for Peace and Democracy statement April 25 titled, “Antiwar, Social Justice, and Human Rights Advocates Oppose Repression in Cuba.”

Signers include the self-described anarchist Noam Chomsky, well-known social democrat Barbara Ehrenreich, historian Howard Zinn, and prominent African-American academic Cornel West. “We, the undersigned, strongly protest the current wave of repression in Cuba,” the statement said. “We condemn the arrests of scores of opponents of the Cuban government for their nonviolent political activities.... We condemn as well the trial and execution of three alleged hijackers in a week's time, both for the lack of due process and because we oppose capital punishment on principle.” This group had earlier produced another document, titled, “We Oppose Both Saddam Hussein and the U.S. War on Iraq: A call for a new, democratic U.S. foreign policy.”

Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, author of *Open Veins of Latin America*, joined the condemnations of Havana as well. “The prison sentences and executions in Cuba,” he said in a recent statement, “are very bad news, very sad news, news that hurt those of us who believe in the admirable courage of this very small country...but we also believe that freedom and justice march together or not at all.” Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez criticized the Cuban measures as well, in a statement published in the daily *El Tiempo de Bogotá* April 29. The writer said he opposes the death penalty “in any place, regardless of the motives or circumstances.”

In his April 25 speech, Castro said that “personalities whom our people hold in high esteem jumped in and gave their opinions and judgments without full knowledge of the facts and realities that should have been taken into account. We had also calculated and foreseen these risks. We do not expect them to share our point of view.”

Debate on these questions is also taking place among revolutionaries in Cuba, Castro acknowledged. “There are also many honest revolutionaries in our country who are opposed to the death penalty,” he said. But they are not joining the chorus of condemnations of Cuba, he said, aiming their fire instead at Washington.

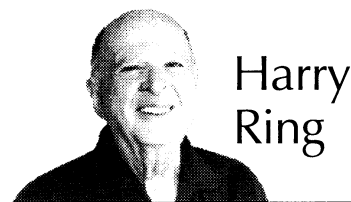
Castro also pointed to the response contained in an open letter titled “Message from Havana to friends who are far away,” signed by a substantial list of well-known writers and artists in Cuba, including Silvio Rodríguez, Miguel Barnet, and Roberto Fernández Retamar. They take issue with “friends who may have been led astray” by joining the condemnations of the recent trials and sentences. To defend itself against attacks by the U.S. government, they state, “Cuba has been forced to adopt forceful measures that it naturally did not want to adopt.”

Discussion among revolutionaries in Cuba should not make Washington think that the Caribbean nation may be more vulnerable to further provocations or military aggression, Castro stated. The U.S. rulers should not forget the warning by Antonio Maceo, a leader of Cuba's struggle against Spanish colonialism, that “whoever tries to take over Cuba will gather up the dust of its blood-soaked soil, if they don't perish in the struggle.”

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**Brooms and dust pans for Iraqis?**—The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have shyly conceded that they have



Harry Ring

failed to keep their pledge to help wipe out global poverty. They have already pledged to help rebuild Iraq, but cautioned this could conflict with their aid to other needy.

**Bloody stench persists**—England's government is currently conducting an inquiry into the 1972

Bloody Sunday attack by British paratroopers against an independence parade in Derry, Northern Ireland. Indelibly stamped, Bloody Sunday. Thirteen marchers were shot dead and more were wounded. Testifying at the present inquiry, Col. Derek Wilford, who commanded the attack, declared, "We did nothing improper."

**They're trying**—The prison population in England and Wales hit a record 73,091. Percentage-wise in relation to the population the number lags behind its senior partner, but it anticipates that in three years its prisons will overflow.

**Try the World Bank**—Fire fighters in Mount Lake Terrace, Washington, sleep in on the floor of a City Hall conference room.

The firehouse has been declared a fire hazard. Also, the dorm room there has no windows. The city council is weighing a remodeling.

**Probably get a good reference**—In Alexandria, Louisiana, a civil service board backed the chief of police in firing a cop who shot a suspected shoplifter. The cop fired nine shots at Sherry Pennington as she drove off with her sister and child. She was wounded in the back and arm. There was no mention of jailing the cop.

**Sometimes it backfires**—It was so raw that Texas prosecutors had to throw it out. Drug convictions had been obtained against 38 people, nearly all Black. The sole evidence against them was the word of a white, now former undercover

cop. Some are already serving 90 years or more. Asked if the convictions were a travesty of justice, the special prosecutor in the case hesitated, and then said yes.

**Homeland Security**—Kankakee is a tiny Illinois town. The lawn of its county courthouse has been a free-speech site. Last month, 65 people gathered for a prayer-for-peace vigil. As they were disbanding, the county sheriff and some cops showed up. The sheriff said that from now on any and all activities would require carefully scrutinized permits. He pointed to the permit for the traditional Salvation Army's senior arts and crafts exhibit, which will get closer consideration. With all those booths there, he explained, "someone could possibly move a bomb

through there, or something."

**Happiness by the pound**—Two professors in England profess they made a 10-year study of 10,000 people to determine if money really could buy happiness. The answer is a definite yes, provided the income was sufficient. A young couple's happiness is worth a tad over \$100,000, observed one of the pros. Not surprisingly, as people get richer they get happier.

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## Argentine cops evict Brukman garment workers

**Continued from Page 12** workers, and state employees." The Federation of Argentine Workers (CTA) is one of the country's main trade union federations.

The police attack on the April 21 demonstration at Brukman has not halted the protests against the eviction. "Our weapons are our sewing scissors, overalls, and needles," said Celia Martínez, as 40 workers began an encampment near the factory. "We are doing this in order to defend our jobs."

A tent that the Brukman workers have established has attracted other workers confronting record-high unemployment levels. Thousands have come out to show their support. Jobless workers organized marches from the suburbs of Buenos Aires into the city, cutting off the Pueyrredón bridge and blocking traffic.

The Pueyrredón bridge is the site of the June 26, 2002, brutal police attack on a march of unemployed workers that killed two piqueteros—Darío Santillán and

Maximiliano Kosteki. The following day the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* published a series of eight photographs that confirmed accounts by demonstrators that the cops killed Santillán and Kosteki in cold blood. More than 10,000 marched June 27, 2002, in Buenos Aires to demand justice for the murdered piqueteros.

After a national outcry, police investigators announced that Santillán and Kosteki had been killed by police bullets fired at close range.

On April 24, some 15,000 turned out in Buenos Aires to rally behind the fight for jobs at Brukman. There had been a lull in protests over the last months, stated Normiella. The outpouring of support for these embattled garment workers made it seem for the moment that the "spirit of December" 2001 could return, he said. That's when a massive upsurge of working-class struggles and protests by professionals and other middle-class layers forced the resignation of the de la Rúa regime.

## LETTERS

### Renew subscription

Please renew my subscription for one year. I really need your analysis of the war in Iraq. My union, the CAW, is presently campaigning for the preservation of the Canada Medicare System. I support this fight wholeheartedly. At the same time, however, Buzz Hargrove, CAW president, is demanding that federal and provincial subsidies be given to the following struggling corporations: Daimler-Chrysler: \$300 million; Ford Motors: \$250 million; Air Canada: the sky's the limit; Bombardier: hundreds of millions in export subsidies.

Where is the money going to come from? CAW members all want job security, but who is going to pay for it? Single mothers on social assistance? Students? Cigarette smokers? Pensioners? Does this affect other unions besides the CAW? Are union brothers and sisters in the United States also confronted with this issue? Your comments would be appreciated and would help me on the job and at union meetings.

Cliff Mack  
Montreal, Quebec

### Mexico police chief lied!

Your article titled "Ex-police chief in Mexico is indicted for murders of student activists in 1970s" hit a close chord. I'm sure you, as I, are further relieved by the facts now known in public, that these cops lied, falsified, accused falsely, and killed, to advance their interests.

I thank you and all of the supporters of my struggle which prevented the same fate for me as all of the other youth accused along with me. They were murdered by these cops.

But the truth comes out, as the truth did on the falsified documents used to frame-up Iraq by the Bush administration—on so-called weapons of destruction—to justify the use of such weapons by Washington.

Yet, working people in Mexico and the United States need some explaining about these developments from a working-class standpoint. Or else, I'm afraid, we can develop wrong ideas or illusions as to what these events signify.

The Mexican political system is in an electoralist setup trying to score points. The present government, whose president Mr. Fox (not Don Fox) is using the crimes committed by his predecessors to get ahead in the game, discredit them, and secure reelection. That is what this circus is.

Led by Don Fox, my former boss, longtime Coca-Cola chief executive officer in Mexico (who barely speaks Spanish) and against whose company I tried to organize



Confirmed: In Cuba there are human rights abuses—U.S. military base in Guantánamo.

a union in Texas, is now the "Guardian Angel" of human rights for Mexicans. The debate on the torture and disappeared is his regime's way of pornographication of Mexican politics, as he kisses Washington's feet leaving Lewinsky way envious.

I also look at these "investigations" as the debate amongst executioners of death, killers of working men and women. One hooded one is a PRI (former party in power) member, the other is a member of the party in power today (PAN-Fox's party). They both have decapitated many workers and peasants, tortured them, exploited them, raped their daughters in passing, but one has power now and the other doesn't. Fox is using it to discredit the previous regime, the other hooded guy, to show that his hooded buddy in charge will be better.

I go with Rosario Ibarra, mother of an arrested, tortured, killed and disappeared fighter mentioned in Barry Fatland's article. The fight is on, she says. And she means it.

The new revelations hardly cover the whole spectrum of crimes, which had to involve more than a couple of official military units, government agencies, and CIA props. It was a brutal, well-armed and -greased machine with murderers at the command with a green light to kill.

Rosario will go down in history as a woman who is a fighter, unconditional, principled, self-sacrificing, tireless, and un-

flinching. Many more women like her are already clear-minded, willing to fight and are not confused by the "Hooded Executioners" act played by imperialism. Their eyes go far deeper, they want not only the ax but all the executioners. They say: PRI, PAN, Democrats, Republicans. All the clowns and hooded executioners. All the same gangrene.

Keep up the good work. Extend my solidarity to Róger Calero.  
Héctor Marroquín  
by e-mail

### Protests in Greece

In mid-April the European Union summit officially signed eight Eastern European workers states and two former British colonies into membership. This summit was met with demonstrations throughout the day in Athens. The demonstrators marched to the U.S., UK, Italian, and Spanish embassies. The focus of the protests was thus one group of imperialist powers. The predatory nature of EU expansion into Eastern Europe is not being dealt with by the major forces involved.

Over the last period there has been at least one weekly mass demonstration against the war in Athens and other cities and towns throughout Greece. These have had a large participation of youth, with three high-school and university student and teacher strikes. There has also been a significant participation of working people,

including among organized workers, as the General Confederation of Greek Workers and the Supreme Council of Public Employees have called strikes, too. These actions have ranged from about 20,000 to 200,000 in Athens.

The axis of all the actions and the vast propaganda carried out by the middle-class Stalinist and Social Democratic currents leading the workers movement, however, has been that the world's evil comes from the vile Anglo-American alliance. More and more voices are heard calling for boycotts of American goods. When criticism is leveled at the Greek government it is that it has not more firmly allied itself with the European, that is Franco-German axis. That it is vacillating.

On the one hand a major section of the Greek bourgeoisie, which sees its future in an expanding Greek presence in the Balkans, has had its wings clipped by the U.S. gains in the Balkan wars. These forces look to Europe, in particular the French and German imperialist states. On the other hand, taking on the U.S. may prove to be a losing proposition. This is particularly true for the large shipping bourgeoisie, which needs to operate in a world trade system they see as dominated by U.S. imperialism.

The problem with the protests at the summit and the antiwar actions has been that they have not only left off the hook some of the biggest European imperialist powers, which incidentally played a criminal role in the war in Yugoslavia, but they have allowed them to be painted in a positive light. Among them the Greek imperialists who have been pushing for their share of post-war construction contracts in Iraq, and Greek oil refinery companies (a force in the Balkans as a whole) salivating at the prospect of higher profits throughout the Balkans as the price of oil drops.

Some ideological gains have been made in deepening the false idea that working people and young fighters share common interests with our "Greek" bourgeoisie and the broader imperialist "peace camp" of Europe. This is an obstacle to working people here as they begin to figure out who their enemies are and who their allies are.

Georges Mehrabian

Athens, Greece

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.**

**Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

## Argentine police evict garment workers occupying Brukman plant

15,000 march in Buenos Aires to protest cop attack, defend fight for jobs

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

More than 200 Argentine federal police stormed the Brukman sewing factory April 18 and evicted the workers who had occupied the plant for one and a half years. The assault took place shortly before the first round of the country's presidential elections April 27.

The week after the attack, thousands protested the police eviction of the 57 workers who have run the Brukman plant in the Balvanera neighborhood of Buenos Aires, the country's capital, since it was abandoned by its former owners in December 2001. The police takeover was ordered by Judge Jorge Rimondi, who ruled that "the factory belongs to the owners."

The cops arrived April 17 at midnight. They forced the workers on security detail out onto the street. The police then posted a guard to block workers from returning to their workplace, according to Leo Norriella, a unionist at a Buenos Aires Pepsico plant, who spoke to *Militant* reporters by phone April 25.

On April 21 thousands of unionists, unemployed workers, activists from neighborhood assemblies, students, and members of left-wing political parties gathered in a mass protest outside the Brukman plant. Reports had circulated that the former boss, Jacobo Brukman, intended to take charge of the factory that morning. When the garment workers moved toward police lines in order to enter the plant, hundreds of cops standing guard fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowd. In their drive to break up the demonstration, the cops pursued protesters into a nearby children's hospital and a University of Buenos Aires building, firing tear gas canisters into the hospital. The police arrested about 100 protesters and wounded 32 in the assault.

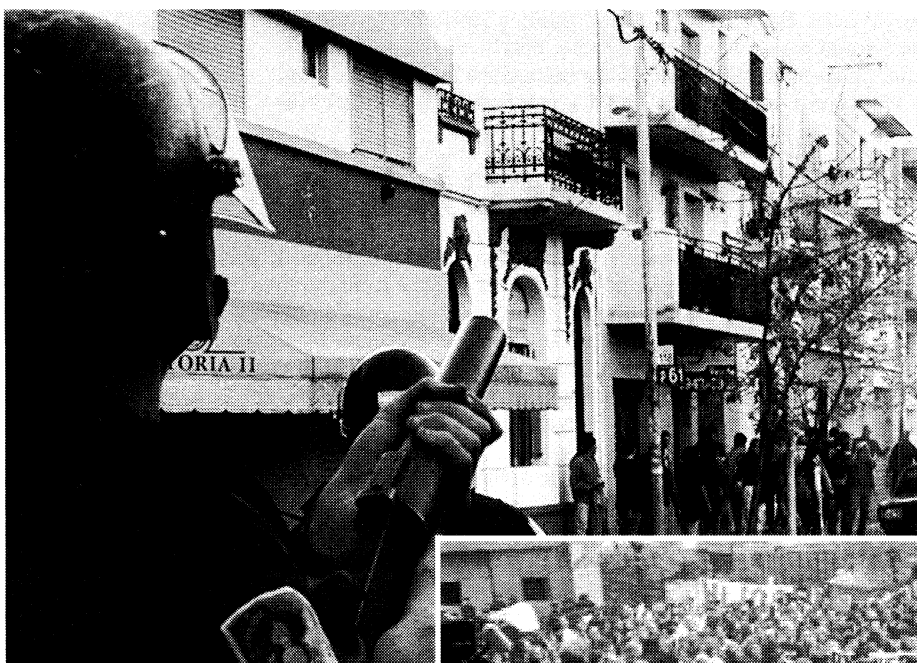
### State of economic collapse

Argentina remains in a state of economic collapse. The fight for jobs is at the center of the class struggle there today. The official unemployment rate exceeds 20 percent. Some 40 percent of adults are unemployed or work only marginal jobs.

In late 2001 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut off loans to Argentina after the government was unable to maintain interest payments and Buenos Aires defaulted on its record \$141 billion foreign debt.

Then-president Fernando de la Rúa initiated a series of drastic cuts in social programs, sparking an explosion of general strikes, road blockades, and mass demonstrations by unemployed workers, known as *piqueteros*, other workers and farmers, and many among the middle classes. This wave of protests forced de la Rúa, of the Radical Party, from office. Congress appointed Eduardo Duhalde from the Peronist *Justicialista* party as president in January 2002. The Peronist party is the main bourgeois political force that has dominated Argentina since World War II. The Radicals have been mostly in the opposition, but have often alternated in the government with the Peronists.

Duhalde ended the 10-year policy of previous administrations of pegging the peso to the dollar. This move precipitated a 70 percent devaluation of the currency, which devastated the buying power of workers' wages and the savings of retirees, shopkeepers, and others. Argentina's Gross Domestic Product shrank 12 percent last year. Official statistics indicate that working people face the double burden of spreading joblessness and a 75 percent increase in the cost of the basic basket of food for a family.



Cops in Buenos Aires (top) attack Brukman garment workers and supporters April 21 (right). More than 15,000 marched in Argentine capital three days later to protest brutal police assault, defend plant occupation, and fight for jobs.

The Brukman owners had cut in half the monthly wage of \$300-\$500 for production workers eight years ago. In the second half of 2001, they increasingly delayed wage payments, sometimes paying as little as five pesos per week, or \$20 per month. When the bosses announced a general layoff and threatened to shut down the plant in December of that year, workers had enough. They decided to occupy the plant the night of that announcement to prevent the owners from removing machinery and other equipment.

The majority of the 57 remaining workers are women. "We work 12-hour shifts and have to take turns sleeping at the plant," Celia Martínez, a member of the workers' factory committee, told the *Guardian* newspaper in December. "We can't leave it empty, because the police or owners

could come at any moment."

Since the occupation began, workers maintained production and have earned on average \$110 per month.

### Attempts to get rid of 'bad example'

By standing up to the employers and their government in Buenos Aires, the workers at Brukman have become heroes in the eyes of many workers and farmers throughout Argentina. The bosses have been looking for a way to get rid of this "bad example."

The April 18 police assault was the third attempt by the Duhalde regime to evict the

workers. In March and in November of last year the cops forced their way into the Brukman plant, only to pull back rapidly in face of mass support for the occupation.

On November 24, more than 200 heavily armed police broke into the plant, arresting six workers on guard duty and a nine-year-old daughter of one of the workers. Within an hour, hundreds of working people from around the city responded to an appeal for help and came out into the street in front of the plant. Later that day, the judge who had issued the eviction notice reversed himself and ordered the police to withdraw from the factory.

Chanting "Brukman belongs to the workers," the garment workers re-occupied the plant. By next day they had resumed

production. Large banners draped over the front of the six-story building declared, "Jobs for all: not one more unemployed," and "Workers at Brukman fight for nationalization under workers' control."

Brukman remains a focal point of labor resistance in Argentina. There have been more than 100 other plant occupations throughout the country, involving an estimated 5,000 workers. Above all the workers at Brukman have forged ties with those at the Zanón ceramic tile factory in the southwest-

ern province of Neuquén. Some 380 workers there began an occupation of their work place in late 2001.

The Duhalde government has ordered the eviction of workers from a number of occupied plants over the last month. "Some 3,500 workers and other trade unionists blocked the cops from entering the [Zanón] factory" in early April, Norriella said. "The provincial government made a decision not to call more cops. The CTA called a strike in solidarity, joined by teachers, health-care

Continued on Page 11

## Municipal workers strike in Sweden

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

GOTHENBURG, Sweden—Some 9,000 municipal workers—child-care nurses, garbage disposal plant workers, and traffic wardens—went on strike across Sweden April 23. The walkout is part of the fight for a national contract covering 595,000 members of the Municipal Workers' Union, 80 percent of whom are women. The central issue is higher pay—above all for unionists in the lower wage range, like child-care and other nurses. The union canceled the third year of the previous national contract, which provided for a 3.5 percent raise, and is now demanding a 5.5 percent wage increase.

Some of the workers now on strike will only be out for a week. They will be followed by other workers staying off the job for a week. The strike will culminate May 12-25, when 46,000 union members will join the walkout. During the partial strikes the union is trying to block overtime work and all hiring of new employees.

"I think the strike would have more effect if we went on for another week or more," said Anita Trogrlic, who was picketing outside a day-care center at Sandeslättsgratan 3 in Hammarkullen, Gothenburg.

"More people know how low our

wages are now, which they did not know before," said Riitta Itkonen, another union member on the picket line. "I think we need to keep fighting, now that we finally have gotten this strike. Most parents support us."

"People tell us to keep fighting, don't give up," said Rocio Falcon, another striker, while doing picket duty. "They think it's good we are picketing, that we can be seen and noticed here."

More than 120 children regularly use this day-care center. During the strike, however, 60 or 70 children cannot attend. The rest will be looked after by nursery school teachers, who also work at day-care centers but under a different contract. "Parents find different solutions," said Itkonen. "Grandparents help out, and some take a few days off from work."

The walkout is affecting other workplaces when parents have to stay home for lack of child care. "One week is possible to handle, but if the strike continues we will have problems," said Ann-Christin Andersson, a spokeswoman from the Sahlgrenska hospital in Gothenburg.

Some nurses at this hospital are scheduled to go on strike April 29-May 5.

"I really get angry at [Swedish prime minister] Göran Persson when he says there is too little money because people are

calling in sick too much," said Trogrlic. "But why don't they ever ask themselves why people get sick?" she continued. "People get bad backs because of lifting children or bending down all the time. But we really had to fight just to get adjustable chairs, so you can sit down when you are undressing small children. And finally we got just one chair for each department in the day-care center. People get sick also because there are too many children in each group, it is too noisy, and there is too much pressure."

"But they would not even buy ear protection when we asked for it," Itkonen added. The four nurses picketing Sandeslättsgratan each earn less than 15,000 Swedish kronor (U.S. \$1,800) per month. "If you are a single parent, it is hard to live on that. You get 9,000 kronor (\$1,060) after taxes and most of that goes to the rent," said Itkonen, who has two children.

The nurses plan to demonstrate on May Day. They hope many members of the Municipal Workers Union will do the same. "It's important," said Falcon. "We really want to be seen now!"

All the nurses at the different day-care centers take turns picketing. "It is very important that everybody gets a sense of participating in this strike," said Trogrlic.